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Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy

MEMOIRS

OF

FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

From the German of W. A. Lampadius.

WITH SUPPLEMENTARY SKETCHES

BY

JULIUS BENEDICT, HENRY F. CHORLEY, LUDWIG RELLSTAB,
BAYARD TAYLOR, R. S. WILLIS, AND J. S. DWIGHT.

EDITED AND TRANSLATED

BY WILLIAM LEONHARD GAGE.

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TO

JOHN S. DWIGHT,

WHOSE ENTHUSIASTIC ADMIRATION FIRST MADE THE LETTERS OF MENDELSSOHN ACCESSIBLE TO AMERICAN READERS, AND WHOSE TASTES ARE SO FULLY IN HARMONY WITH THE PURITY OF MENDELSSOHN'S GENIUS AND LIFE,

This Translation is Dedicated,

AS A SLIGHT EXPRESSION OF THANKS FOR JUDICIOUS COUNSEL AND TIMELY ENCOURAGEMENT.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE time predicted by one who wrote the sentence years ago seems to have come, "when every line and every word from Mendelssohn's pen would be treasured by the world." Most great composers make their appeal for recognition to a comparatively small circle of admirers, and are rarely quoted beyond the domain of their art. It is so with Mendelssohn neither in Germany, in England, nor in America. Chorley little knew what a weighty sentence he was inditing, when he penned the words, "There may come a day yet, when the example of Mendelssohn's life, yet more than of his works, may be invoked in Germany." In England there was always a passionate adoration of him as a man; the fascinating presence, the stories of his remarkable culture, his unselfishness, his moral purity, his entirely religious and Christian character, awakening an interest in every thing pertaining to him, which found hardly an exaggerated expression in the pages of

"Charles Auchester," and which has not ceased yet. And within a few years the people of culture in America have begun to take as deep an interest in Mendelssohn as those of Germany and England: hardly any books have found more enthusiastic readers among us than Mendelssohn's Letters. That wonderful romance, the most wholesome gift by far of Miss Sheppard to the world, "Charles Auchester," has found thousands of admirers, who have been charmed by its pages. It was the fashion years ago to fling at that book as rhapsodical; but this biography will convince the reader, if the Letters of Mendelssohn have not already done so, that that work, with all its splendid coloring, and all its seeming exaggerations, scarcely overrated the glory, the beauty, the capacity, and the compass of Mendelssohn's life. A completer transcript of the spirit of Mendelssohn could hardly have been made. His wonderful reach of memory was certainly not over-estimated in the scene where he directs the "Messiah" from his memory of the score: that would have been a light task for Mendelssohn. The death of his sister Fanny, narrated in this biography, is closely adhered to in the romance: the characters of Zelter, Joachim the violinist, Jenny Lind, and Sterndale Bennett, are finely painted in Aronach, Charles Auchester, Julia Bennett, and Starwood Burney. But it were

needless to speak more at length: enough to say, that, the more we know of Mendelssohn, the more clearly we see how closely Miss Sheppard adhered to the facts and coloring of his life in her fascinating portrait. It is no descent from the Seraphael of "Charles Auchester" to the writer of Mendelssohn's Letters. The plane is the same, though the true Mendelssohn is a shade more joyous and less pensive than the counterfeit. But we trace the same exquisite purity in both; the same unsordid spirit; the same unwillingness to write, except under the stress of a great inspiration; the same freedom from envy; the same recoil from all immorality; the same abhorrence of French and Italian sensuality; the same devotion to what is good, noble, and, in the strictest use of speech, Christ-like.

Not long after the death of Mendelssohn, Lampadius, a friend of his, a musical amateur, and evidently a man of nice tastes and of high-toned character, wrote a biography of the great composer, which has been made the basis of all the smaller sketches of his life, but which now appears in a literal translation from the German for the first time. It may be said of it, that it is not the best biography of Mendelssohn that could be written, but it is the best and indeed the only one that has been written, or is likely to be for some time. Doubtless, the time will come when this

brief work will be superseded by one more exhaustive: till then, it remains without a rival. It has, too, some qualities of striking and sterling character; it was written with all the loving ardor which followed Mendelssohn's sudden death; it is a bouquet of fresh flowers laid on his grave. It portrays his career as Director at Leipzig, certainly the best part of his life, with minuteness and fidelity; and in its whole delineation, while it shows unmistakable marks of the warmth of friendship, it yet displays colors vivid, glowing, and delightful. I have preserved all his details; and the record will hardly be judged by musical readers to be too full: for it is a great advantage to know what were just the programmes selected by so consummate a judge as Mendelssohn for performance at those Leipzig Concerts which made that city, while he lived, the musical capital of Europe.

Acting as editor as well as translator, I have sought to bring together all available materials in English, French, and German, which could illustrate Mendelssohn's character and career, and thus render the work of Lampadius even more complete than its author left it. Very much, however, of what has been written, — Neumann's sketch in "Die neuen Componisten," and "Julie de Marguerette's," for instance, — are only Lampadius reproduced in briefer compass. Still, this search has

not been inadequately rewarded; and in the modest and admirable account, by Julius Benedict, of Mendelssohn in England; in the free, sparkling, and valuable chapters from Chorley's "Modern Music;" in Rellstab's, Bayard Taylor's, and Richard Storrs Willis's glimpses of Mendelssohn; in the descriptive analysis of his oratorio "Elijah" by Mr. Dwight, — the reader will find much that will throw light on the subject of this biography as a man and an artist.

Preparing this work as a recreation amid severer studies, I part with it not as freed from a heavy burden, but as turning back from a holiday's pastime to labor. Brief and fragmentary as it is as a biography, it cannot fail to do good if it shall bring any of our American people to know and love the pure spirit of Mendelssohn.

WILLIAM LEONHARD GAGE.

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LIFE OF MENDELSSOHN.

CHAPTER I.

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WHEN a citizen dies whose life has been devoted to the common weal, his city mourns his loss with a general grief; when a ruler who has been devoted to all the duties of his office goes to his grave, his countrymen lament over his death: but, when a king in the domain of genius is withdrawn from the sphere of his labors, thousands upon thousands of hearts which beat with love for what is good and true are filled with sorrow, thousands upon thousands of eyes are filled with tears. Such sorrow is that which laments the premature death of FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY, who, had he lived, would now (1864) be but at the age when most men are in the very prime of their years. For in him departed the last classic spirit of Germany's great epoch

of culture. But as Providence blessed him in life, giving him no harder battle to fight than that which came from the constantly unsatisfied aspirations struggling within his own breast; even so, in his death, the gain is with him, and not with us. Not because he took his departure after having attained the highest summit of his fame, (for who is bold enough to insist, that, if he had lived, he would have produced something greater than he ever did?) but because he, though a classic, is honored at a time when Germany has ceased to honor its greatest spirits as it ought; when a Beethoven, a Mozart, a Schiller, have to wait, and as yet in vain, for one to rise, and show the world the wealth of their genius and the course of their lives.

Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, son of Abraham Mendelssohn, a well-known banker, and himself a man of very refined tastes, and grandson of Moses Mendelssohn, the eminent philosopher, first saw the light in Hamburg the 3d of February, 1809. The house in which he was born was the large one, still standing, just back of St. Michael's Church; and in the same house, by a happy coincidence, his warm friend and fellow-artist, Ferdinand David, was born just a year later. He was the second of four children, — Fanny, the oldest; then Felix, Paul, and Rebecca His mother, born a Bartholdy, was a very gifted woman, and watched over the progress of the boy with devoted love, which was requited by the

utmost affection. The father, too, was always regarded with great tenderness by Felix. When the child was three or four years old, the family removed to Berlin. Under the favoring star which held him back, from his birth, from all contact with what was common and vulgar, his wonderful talents opened and ripened early. Even in his eighth year, he played the piano with remarkable facility; and at the same early age he disclosed that remarkable power of criticism, that lynx-eye as Zelter termed it, which enabled him to detect six consecutive fifths in a piece of Sebastian Bach, which escaped the keen eye of Zelter himself; and also that almost miraculous fineness of ear, which in the most powerful orchestra, or in an immense chorus, detected the least error of a single instrument or of a voice. He showed, too, an uncommon productivity for his years. Zelter, the veteran in musical science, and Ludwig Berger, the master in musical art, were his first teachers in composition and in piano-forte playing. Zelter called Mendelssohn his best scholar, even at the age of twelve; and his letters to Goethe are evidences of his warm interest in the lad, although that interest was often disguised by a rough address, which doubtless did some injury to the gentle spirit of young Felix. The best fruit of this correspondence was the intimate relation in which after this he always stood to Goethe. This nearness, and ease of approach, to a nature so grand and rich

as Goethe's, was a very great advantage to Mendelssohn, and tended to encourage all that was large, generous, and noble in him, and to repress all that was small, contracted, and sickly. It would be a great treat* to the reading-world to be permitted to look into the correspondence of Goethe and Mendelssohn: for the present, it is enough to glean from Zelter's and Goethe's letters the progress of this always-increasing intimacy. Zelter speaks of Felix in expressions like these: "He plays the clavichord like a young devil;" or, "Felix is always the first." And, in the autumn of 1821, he writes to Goethe regarding a visit which he was about to make him: "I want my Doris and my best scholar to look upon your face before I die." In November of that year, he brought together his aged friend and his loved pupil. Afterward Goethe wrote to Zelter, in his cool, measured way, "Say a good word to Felix too, and his parents. Since he went away, my piano has been dumb: an effort to waken it again would, I am afraid, be useless after that." But this casual interest was destined to be yet deepened. Zelter wrote more fully regarding his boy's wonderful talents and great industry, and Goethe's friendship grew warmer towards him. On the 8th of February, 1824, Zelter wrote, "Yesterday evening, Felix's fourth opera was brought out here in a little circle of us, with the dialogue. There are

* Happily granted now (1864).

three acts, which, with the two ballets, occupied about two hours and a half. The work was received with much applause. I can hardly master my own wonder how the boy, who is only about fifteen, has made such progress. Everywhere you find what is new, beautiful, and peculiar, — wholly peculiar. 'Tis massive, as if from an experienced hand; the orchestra interesting, not oppressive, not wearisome, — not mere accompaniment. The performers like to play it; yet it is not very easy. What is known comes and goes, not as if taken for granted, but as if welcome, and just in its appropriate place, — life, joy without impatient haste, tenderness, grace, love, passion, innocence. The overture is a wonderful thing. You seem to see a painter rubbing a dingy color with brush and finger on the canvas, till at last a finished group emerges. You are amazed: you look to see how it came about, and only see that it must be so because it is true."

In this rather rough and disjointed yet expressive style, Zelter shows the gradual emerging of some central theme, around which a group of musical fancies arrange themselves; just as is the case, for example, in the overture, "The Hebrides." — "Certainly," Zelter goes on to say, "I speak as a grandfather who pardons his boy. I know what I say, and I have said nothing that I cannot prove. First the multitude applauded; then the orchestra-people and the singers: and that is the way

by which you can tell whether a piece is received warmly or coldly; whether the applause is real and generous, or only affected. This is a thing for you to notice. When the performer enters with his soul into what lies before him, and testifies that the composer has suited him, that is true applause; that tells the whole." How this wise word of Zelter's was confirmed afterwards! How enthusiastically the singers and players of Leipzig, for example, attended the rehearsals of "St. Paul" and the "Hymn of Praise" at a later day! How unwearied the orchestra was in overcoming all the technical difficulties which the overture and the music of the "Midsummer Night's Dream" presented! No one realized how, by pleasantry and earnestness, by appropriate praise and rightly directed blame, by his quiet glance and undemonstrative yet effective manner, he was able to help the performers over all the hard passages.

The following year (1825), Mendelssohn's father took him to Paris to introduce him to Cherubini, and to inquire of that distinguished musician, with a modesty creditable to both father and son, whether Felix had such a decided musical talent as would justify his devoting himself exclusively to that department of art.* Cherubini's answer was, of course, in the affirmative.

* Mendelssohn supported the great violinist Baillot, at this time, in his quartet in B minor.

On their return, they both visited Goethe. The latter wrote to Zelter, under date May 21, 1825: "Felix produced his new quartet to the amazement of every one. This personal dedication to me, through the ear, has pleased me very much." In June, he sent to the young Mendelssohn what Zelter called "a pretty love-letter." Mendelssohn reciprocated the compliment by sending to Goethe the next year a carefully elaborated copy of Terence's "Andria." In a letter written Oct. 11, 1826, Goethe bade Zelter thank Felix for "this very skilful specimen of earnest æsthetic studies: his work will be a lasting fund of entertainment to the Weimar scholars these long winter evenings." In April, 1829, Mendelssohn went to England at Moscheles' invitation; and, while riding out in a gig with a friend, he was unfortunately thrown out, and severely injured in the knee. After Goethe had heard of this from Zelter, he wrote with the most anxious interest: "I wish also to learn whether good news has come about our excellent Felix. I take the greatest interest in him; for it is painful in the extreme to see one, of whom so much is expected, put in peril by such an occurrence. Tell me something cheering about him."

But the gifted young composer received his real dedication to art, during a fortnight's visit to Goethe, just before his journey to Italy. What a sweet foretaste of the pleasures he was about to enjoy, what a delight-

ful promise of what was in store, did the young Mendelssohn receive from him who sang the song of the "Land wo die Citronen blühn"! How much satisfaction Goethe derived from that visit, we learn from his letter to Zelter, under date of June 3: "Just now, this early summer morning, under a beautiful sky, Felix has taken his departure with Ottilie (Madame von Goethe), Ulrike (Fräulein Poggwisch), and the children (among them Walter von Goethe, the present composer), after spending a fortnight with us, delighting us with his art, and leaving with us the memory of delightful hours. His visit will indeed be a cherished thing. To me his presence was especially valuable, as I found my relations to music still unchanged. I listened with satisfaction and delight. The historical development of music, as Felix portrayed it, was particularly interesting; for who can understand a thing who does not penetrate it far enough to know its history? The chief excellence in Felix is, that he not only thoroughly understands the history of musical science, but his rare memory brings to him the best pieces of each era, and enables him to play at will what best illustrates the development of music. From Bach down, he has called Haydn, Mozart, and Gluck back to life. Of the great moderns he has given examples enough; and, lastly, he has played his own pieces in such a way as to make me both feel and remember

them. He has gone from here with my heartiest blessings. Remember me very cordially to his parents." After this time, up to Goethe's death, the two remained in constant correspondence; and Goethe always expressed his admiration of his "cheerful, affectionate, most interesting letters," as well as took the most active interest in his progress. On the 4th of January, 1831, he writes to Zelter: "Felix, whose welfare and happy stay in Rome you announce to me, must be always taken the best care of: such extraordinary talents joined to such an amiable nature!" On the 31st of March, he writes: "First of all, I must tell you that I have just received a very full and affectionate letter from Felix, which gives me an excellent picture of his life. There is now no reason to fear that he will go through fire and water, only to come out at barbarism at last." How truly this prophecy was fulfilled! With what energy Mendelssohn has persevered in all the decay of art, and amid the rank growth that covers the glorious old ruins, keeping close only to what was classic, and in no one of his creations catering to the depraved taste of the times!

I speak more fully regarding this connection between Mendelssohn and Goethe than I should, had not this important step in his progress been overlooked by most who have lately written about him. He may be regarded as the last gift of that great period in which

Germany's men of genius tempered their gifts in the furnace of a glorious antiquity; and to show Mendelssohn just his place, and leave upon him an impress so strong that it could never be lost, this connection with Goethe was needed, who united so finely a Greek nature and culture with a genuine German spirit. But, in order to appreciate this connection and its influence, we must review the events in the life of the young artist. I will therefore run through the story of the development of his genius, beginning at the point where we left the lad under the care of Zelter and Ludwig Berger.

Ludwig Berger had planted the young tree: Zelter had tilled the ground around it, and had been a kind of stormy wind to it, shaking it roughly, but only to cause it to sink its roots deeper and stronger. There was wanting, however, even yet, the skilful gardener, combining thoroughness with grace, who should protect it from the frost, and bring its first-fruits to perfection. He was found, in 1824, in Moscheles, an artist of the highest order, whose efforts to bring out the genius of Mendelssohn were crowned with a success which the gifted pupil was the first to ascribe to its right source. I will extract a passage from Moscheles' journal made at that time, which he has kindly permitted me to use, and which will clearly show the relation he then bore to Mendelssohn. "In the autumn of 1824, I gave my first

concerts in Berlin. I was acquainted with the Mendelssohn Family, and was soon on terms of intimacy with them. In the course of my daily visits at their house, I became familiar with the musical powers of young Felix, and was much interested in his charming character. His youthful efforts were, to my mind, a sufficient guaranty of the eminence which he was destined to attain. His parents often urged me to give him instruction on the piano; and although his former instructor, Ludwig Berger, consented to this arrangement willingly, yet I hesitated about putting this powerful genius under a leading influence which might have the injurious effect of conflicting with the direction which his own original nature might suggest to him. Yet, at their repeated requests, I did give him lessons. He even then could play any thing that I could, and grasped the slightest hint with lightning-like rapidity. My 'E-flat Major Concerto' he played almost at first sight; and my 'Sonate mélancholique' he rendered very finely." Other passages indicate very pleasantly the intensely musical life of the Mendelssohn household. On the 14th of November, Moscheles was there: it was the celebration of the birthday of his oldest sister, Fanny. A symphony by Mendelssohn was given. He himself played Mozart's "C-minor Concerto;" and, with his sister, a duo-concerto in E major, composed by himself. Zelter and many members of the Royal

Chapel were present. On the 28th of the same month, there was another musical entertainment at the same place, — Mendelssohn's father's house. A symphony in D major by the young artist was given. He played his piano-quartet in C minor; and his sister Fanny, a concerto by Sebastian Bach. On the 5th of December, Mozart's "Requiem" was given. Mendelssohn accompanied on the piano. On the 12th of December, at a similar concert, Felix played his "F-minor Quartet;" and Moscheles gave for the first time his piece, afterwards so famous, — "Homage to Handel." Soon after this, if I mistake not, Moscheles went to England.

The 19th of November, 1826, was a memorable epoch in Mendelssohn's career; for then he played, for the first time, his overture to the "Midsummer Night's Dream," — his first work which bore the distinct marks of genius, and which gave him at once a name in the musical world. He first played it with his sister Fanny as a duet for the piano.

This is enough to indicate the strong musical direction of his father's household, and to show that Mendelssohn himself furnished the most valuable material, and yet constantly nourished his own genius at the same feast which was so delightful to others. So far as Moscheles' influence on him is concerned, we shall hardly mistake, I suppose, if we set it down as certain,

that he confined himself to merely giving him a strong impulse, and hints as to execution; and yet it is certain that to those hints may be largely ascribed that elegance and roundness, which, with other prominent excellences, were always observable in Mendelssohn's piano-playing, down to the last. Yet Moscheles soon exchanged the relation of teacher for that of friend, — a bond which was always rich in usefulness and real joy to Mendelssohn. It was Moscheles who first introduced him to the great world, by persuading him to come to London; for it can hardly be denied that the reputation of Mendelssohn first became appreciable in Germany after his return from England. In the place of his youth, in Berlin, his talents did not gain prompt recognition. During all the denial of his genius by this city, Moscheles kept up his courage; and, for this, Mendelssohn remained grateful to the end of his life. There was no lack of letters between them; and from one of Mendelssohn's I make a brief extract. It seems to have been written about 1839. "You still keep up your encouraging words, and show your good-will; and, so long as *you* do, all the *dii minorum gentium* may make faces as much as they will." All through Mendelssohn's life, he was proud to call himself Moscheles' scholar.

Felix's body and mind were assiduously cared for by his excellent father; trained harmoniously, and not sac-

rificed to the love of music alone. We see him, in his seventeenth year, devoting himself to gymnastics, riding, and swimming. Having an excellent classical preparation, in 1827 he entered the University of Berlin, and gave himself earnestly to the cultivation of those sciences which accorded with his own chosen profession. Among other professors, he listened to Hegel, who set great value on music (as Zelter himself tells us); and soon knew how to reproduce all his peculiarities in a very pleasant and naïve way. The abstract nature of Hegel, his dragging every thing practical, every thing that lay before him, into his system, and his dry, absent way, were a great source of merriment to Felix. About this time, he went to Stettin to help bring out there his newest works. On the 11th of March, he directed Bach's "Passion," which he had practised with Zelter: for a director of twenty, certainly an amazing feat.

As early as 1827, Mendelssohn's father had written to Moscheles, in London, to inquire whether he would advise Felix to travel. It is probable that he favored the plan; yet the father preferred to postpone his son's departure till the completion of his studies at the university. It was the spring of 1829, when the moment arrived for the young man to try his pinions in flight out into the great world. Before we follow him, let us glance at his productive activity thus far. Mendelssohn

had composed up to this time, so far as I can learn, three quartets, in C minor, F minor, and B minor, for piano, violin, viola, and violoncello; two sonatas, — one for the piano-forte and violin (F minor), the other for the piano-forte alone (B-flat major); a symphony in C minor, and another in D major; a symphony overture; various operettas, — among them, the one now printed, "Camacho's Wedding;" two sets of songs, twelve in each set; and the two great overtures, — to the "Midsummer Night's Dream," and "A Calm at Sea (*Meeresstille*) and Prosperous Voyage;" which last he seems to have written soon after the "Midsummer Night's Dream" was finished. If he really composed that overture before viewing the sea, it was as great an effort of the imagination as the picture of Alpine scenery in Schiller's "William Tell." It were not possible for the depressing calm, the joy over the first puffs of air, the sailing of the ship into port, to be better painted by music. Besides these, he composed a capriccio, and some smaller piano pieces, and the octet. But this is enough to show that the young artist displayed a wonderfully precocious genius, and justified the fond hopes which were cherished of his future.

CHAPTER II.

Mendelssohn visits England. — Concerts in London with Sontag. — First public Performance ever given of the "Midsummer Night's Dream" Overture. — He visits Scotland and the Hebrides. — He returns to Germany, visits Munich, and then sets his Steps towards Italy. — His Sojourn in Italy, and its Fruits. — He visits Paris; thence goes to London; afterwards, Home to Berlin.

ON the 26th of March, 1829, Mendelssohn informed Moscheles of his bringing out Bach's "Passion Music," and announced his speedy departure. On the 20th of April, he arrived at London. Moscheles had made the directors of the Philharmonic Society acquainted with his extraordinary talents, and prepared every thing for his favorable reception. Mendelssohn brought his old teacher, in manuscript, a sacred cantata on a choral in A minor, a motet for sixteen voices, and his first stringed quartet in A minor. At the Philharmonic Concert, his overture to the "Midsummer Night's Dream" was given publicly for the first time, and pleased very much. At a concert given by Henrietta Sontag, his concerto in E major for two pianos, and his Midsummer overture, were given with the most

enthusiastic applause. The journey to Scotland, which he took for his pleasure, suggested to him the overture, "Fingal's Cave" or "The Hebrides." He wrote this probably after his return to Berlin the same year. It is said that this was the manner in which the overture, "The Hebrides," took its rise: Mendelssohn's sisters asked him to tell them something about the Hebrides. "It cannot be told, only played," he said. No sooner spoken than he seated himself at the piano, and played the theme which afterwards grew into the overture.

In May, 1830, he continued his travels. At Weimar, as has been already said, he tarried a couple of weeks with Goethe, and thence went to Munich. Here he heard for the first time the eminent pianist, Delphine von Schauroth; who seems to have inspired Mendelssohn with even more than artistic interest. It is said that the beautiful "Travel Song" from Opus 19, "Bring the Heart's Truest Greeting," which he composed at Rome, is to be ascribed to that interest. He journeyed through Italy in company with several painters, — Hildebrand, Sohn, Hübner, Bendemann, and others; and arrived at Rome the 1st of November, where he tarried till April, 1831, and thence went to Naples. In Rome, he composed the music to Goethe's "First Walpurgis Night;" as if he wanted to free himself, by its bracing vigor, from the untoning influence of the South. It would be

interesting to know more about Mendelssohn's stay in Italy.*

He wished much to visit Sicily; but did not, in consequence of his father's wish. On his return from Italy, he visited Switzerland; and in February, 1832, we find him in Paris, where he gave in public his overture to the "Midsummer Night's Dream." It was the third, and, so far as I know, the last time that he visited Paris The French nature did not please him. After overcom ing an attack of cholera in Paris, he went to London. Here he added to the list of his influential friends Klingemann, who was then attached to the Hanoverian embassy, and who wrote the verses to a number of songs by him. This time he could show Moscheles the manuscripts of three new pieces of the highest value, — the music of the "Walpurgis Night," the overture, "Fingal's Cave," and the "G-minor Concerto;" that masterly composition for the piano-forte and orchestra, which will always remain as a fine type of the blended grace, imagination, and fire in Mendelssohn's genius. On the 14th of May, the overture, "Fingal's Cave," was given for the first time at the Philharmonic Concert in London. On the 28th of May, Mendelssohn himself played his "G-minor Concerto" for the first time. The 1st of June, he played, with Moscheles, Mozart's duo-concerto, and di-

* This want has been richly supplied in Mendelssohn's Letters from Italy and Switzerland. Philadelphia: F. Leypoldt.

rected the "Midsummer Night's Dream" overture. On the 10th of June, he played fugue music on the organ in St. Paul's Church, to the amazement of all the listeners. He also took part in other entertainments, to all of which I hardly need refer; and, on the 23d of June, he turned his steps towards Berlin.

CHAPTER III.

Mendelssohn applies for the Directorship of the Sing-Academie in Berlin. — Is disappointed. — Assumes Charge of the Düsseldorf Musical Festival. — A new Epoch in his Life. — Success in Düsseldorf. — Flying Trip to London, and Concerts there. — The Düsseldorf Festival. — He is chosen Municipal Music Director. — Friendship with Immermann. — Their united Labors. — Estrangement. — Cologne Musical Festival. — Efforts to secure Mendelssohn at Leipzig.

THE directorship of the Berlin Sing-Academie was now vacant; and, at the urgent solicitation of his friends, Mendelssohn applied for the place, as he now wished for some stated field of labor. He was not elected, however: the choice fell on Rungenhagen.* By a series of concerts, whose proceeds were to be applied to benevolent purposes, Mendelssohn tried to educate the musical taste of the city. In a round of miscellaneous duties, and without any definite occupation, he labored on for some time, till, in the spring of 1833, he was invited to assume the direction of the annual Musical Festival at Düsseldorf.

With his visit to Düsseldorf begins a new epoch in the life of Mendelssohn. The first stage in his career

* The opposition seems to have been headed by the more elderly ladies of the Sing-Academie, though the failure of "Camacho's Wedding" seems to have left a lasting prejudice against Mendelssohn.

was his boyhood in his father's house; the second was the time devoted to travel; and this, to which we now come, was the third, — the one which was to put his genius, power, and learning to the test.

He entered upon his course with a conqueror's tread; gaining an assured success so far as he went, yet in such a way and against such opposition as showed him that he must contend for every inch of his progress. Even among musicians, he found hostile spirits who stood in his path. Yet it was a glorious piece of good fortune that his first invitation carried him to Düsseldorf; for here he rejoined that company of painters with whom he had made the tour of Italy. That whole circle (William Schadow, the sculptor, being the central figure) gave him a most cordial welcome, and not only then, but to the end of his life, remained attached to him in bonds of almost fraternal affection.

But, before we accompany Mendelssohn to this new field of labor, we must follow him to London; and although the direction of the Musical Festival at Düsseldorf falls between a first and second visit to London in 1833, we must enter a little into detail about his reception at that great metropolis. He arrived in London on the 25th of April; and, in conjunction with Moscheles, he composed in two days the four-handed variations on the Gypsy March from "Preciosa," which the two artists played at Moscheles' concert on the 1st of May. This

union of labor went so far, that they sometimes improvised at the same piano, in four-handed playing; demanding a most intimate understanding of each other's thoughts and feelings in the working-out of the theme. On the 13th of May, at the Philharmonic Concert, the symphony in A major, by Mendelssohn, was given; on the 15th, the variations from "Preciosa;" after which Mendelssohn left London for Düsseldorf. On the 8th of June, however, he returned to London in company with his father. On the 10th of June, an overture in C major, written by him, was given; probably the same which had been played at Düsseldorf. For a number of weeks, the father was confined to his room by lameness. While Felix tended him, he wrote for Moscheles a four-handed arrangement of his septet. During these weeks of confinement, he also played to Moscheles, from manuscript, his overture to "Melusina." It grew out of a picture which he had probably seen at Düsseldorf, where Melusina appears hovering on the top of a tower.* Moscheles produced it at the Philharmonic Concert of April 7, 1834; where, however, it did not meet with a hearty recognition. Given again in one of Moscheles' own concerts, in conjunction with a rondo by Mendelssohn in E-flat major (Op. 29), it was well received. It would have gone better the first time, I

* Mendelssohn, in his "Letters," gives quite a different account of it.

think, had it not been for the weight of the orchestra: the delicate and unusual style demanded a more gentle manner of instrumentation. A letter of Mendelssohn to Moscheles now existing is very interesting, written after he had received from the latter an account of the first performance. He thanks him in the heartiest manner, and expresses the highest gratification that the overture pleased him. Mendelssohn needed a good deal of approbation at this time to give him confidence enough in himself, which was wanting as yet. He then jokingly adds, that Moscheles' praise is better than three orders of nobility; and goes on to give some excellent hints about the execution of the piece, — about the wind-instrumentation, for example, — which he wanted played *pp;* but he is careful to say not *ppp* (so strong was his objection to every thing forced and unnatural). On the 25th of August, 1833, he left London, and did not see it again for a long time.

We now turn back to Düsseldorf. At the great Musical Festival there, which he directed, and which was held about the last of May or first of June, the great overture in C major, written, I think, in 1823 or 1824, but never performed in Germany till then, was given together with "Israel in Egypt," the great "Leonora" overture in C, the "Pastoral Symphony," Wolf's "Easter Cantata," and Winter's "Power of Music." He himself played Von Weber's concert-piece. The festival,

honored by the co-operation of the great soloist Madame Decker, was characterized by so admirable a selection, and so excellent a performance, that there was a strong wish to retain the director at Düsseldorf. For this purpose, the city created the office of Municipal Musical Director; assigning him the care of the weekly meetings of the Vocal Society, the care of the Winter Concerts, and the direction of the music in the Catholic church. The concerts seem not to have given all the satisfaction which was hoped; since in the whole time, from November, 1833, to May, 1834, only three were held. Yet no blame can be attached to Mendelssohn, who selected very fine programmes, and twice played the piano himself.

During this period, he was united by ties of the closest intimacy to the poet Immermann. They had known each other before. At Mendelssohn's request, Immermann had written a libretto, in the spring of 1833, from Shakspeare's "Tempest," for Mendelssohn to set to music; but the latter had not found it available. It was interesting; in some passages, highly poetic; but not suitable for opera, as Immermann had a special lack of lyrical talent. This rejection of the libretto had, however, no effect on their friendly relations to each other. These grew more close and intimate; and Immermann seems to have clung to Mendelssohn with the most devoted attachment.

The close friendship of these two distinguished men,

and the low estate to which the German theatre had fallen, inspired the hope that they would effect an entire reformation of the drama. Immermann, Mendelssohn, and Uechtritz, an eminent friend of both, declared themselves ready to enter upon this much-needed work. In the spring of 1834, the preliminary trials were made to test the chances of success. Among them were given "Don Juan" and the "Water-carrier," the first operas which Mendelssohn publicly directed; also Goethe's "Egmont," with Beethoven's music. In the preparation of Calderon's "Steadfast Prince," Mendelssohn composed the following music needed for its representation, — two choruses, a march, a battle-piece, and the melodramatic part. This very interesting and characteristic music has not been used since. These preliminary efforts were so successful, that a company was formed, a large capital raised, and a new and commodious theatre erected, at Düsseldorf. A directory of eleven persons controlled the whole management. Immermann and Mendelssohn were conjoined with them, — the one having the chief direction of the drama; the other, of the opera. As Mendelssohn could not and would not devote himself wholly to this enterprise, he invited to Düsseldorf a friend of his youth, and one of his most skilful scholars, — Julius Rietz. They had been acquainted in Berlin; were of about the same age (Rietz a little the younger); and

Mendelssohn had given him lessons on the piano. I use the title of scholar of Mendelssohn, with regard to Rietz, with no other significance than as denoting one of the best living representatives of the Mendelssohn school, of which there is needed no better specimen than his noble "Festival Overture in A Major." On the 28th of October, 1834, the theatre was opened with the "Prince of Hamburg," and an excellent prologue written by Immermann. At the close of the prologue, Raphael's "Parnassus" was presented as a *tableau vivant*, for which Mendelssohn had composed music.

Unhappily the theatre was a source of misunderstanding between Immermann and Mendelssohn. They both had the best, the noblest of intentions: they only lacked the requisite theatrical experience. Mendelssohn gave offence by bringing from Berlin some young and unripe performers. Immermann, on the other hand, wanted to exalt the spoken drama at the expense of the opera; or, rather, he wanted no opera at all. This gave rise to reproaches on both sides, an exchange of sharp words, and, at last, to total estrangement. Mendelssohn withdrew, after he had studied and twice directed "Oberon," in the very first weeks of the first season, and despite his own engagement; and his relation to Immermann was never again one of friendship. The theatre sustained itself with great difficulty till the spring of 1837.

But though his tie to a great poet was thus dissolved, yet his relations to the painters of Düsseldorf grew closer than ever. He himself cultivated in those years his remarkable powers in drawing; and under the direction of Schirmer, the great landscape painter of Düsseldorf, to whom he afterwards dedicated his CXIV. Psalm, executed a very beautiful sketch in water-colors. He exercised this gift in a very attractive manner in adorning the albums of his friends. To Klingemann in London, for instance, he sent an album containing thirty drawings, illustrating Klingemann's own poems. Prof. Moscheles also possesses a number of sketches from his hand, pleasant reminiscences of their artist-life together, with exquisite touches of humor where they illustrate Moscheles as a musician.

Meantime, in the winter of 1834–5, the concerts, and the weekly meetings of the Vocal-music Society, were in their perfect bloom. There were seven concerts given, at two of which the "Messiah" and Haydn's "Seasons" were performed. But the great business of Mendelssohn at Düsseldorf was the composition of "St. Paul." Besides that great and enduring work of genius, he wrote the three piano capriccios (Op. 33); a number of songs without words; among others, those of the second set, and the three Heine songs in the first set of his four-part songs (Op. 41). In all sorts of musical delights, he was not wanting; and Mendelssohn was

not at all chary in playing for the entertainment of his friends.

In the spring of 1835, he was invited to take the direction of the Cologne Musical Festival; which he did. There were given: "Festival Overture," by Beethoven, in C; Handel's "Solomon," with new organ part by Mendelssohn; Beethoven's "Eighth Symphony;" Milton's "Morning Song," with Reichardt's music; "Overture to Euryanthe," and a "Religious March and Hymn" by Cherubini. The gratification of the Cologne musical public was complete. In token of their appreciation, the committee presented him with the London edition of Handel's Works, and their thanks beautifully written on parchment, together with the signatures of the six hundred performers whom he had directed.

Meantime, Mendelssohn's reputation had reached Leipzig, and there was a strong wish to secure his services in that city. Some of the most eminent fellows of the university had cherished the hope of accomplishing the object by founding a professorship of music for Mendelssohn, whose thorough mastery of musical science was known to them. He was questioned regarding this. He wrote back, politely thanking them for the honor, but declining to read lectures, for which, as we all learned afterwards, he had no talent. Meantime, the wish to secure him had grown into a determination; and the very hand which wrote to him about a profes-

sorship was instrumental in procuring for him the direction of the Leipzig Gewandhaus concerts. This post he accepted. According to his Düsseldorf contract, he could be released from his engagement there at the end of two years. He obtained this release; and after giving, on the 2d of July, 1835, a very choice concert, — in which he played his piano capriccio in B minor, — he left Düsseldorf, to the great grief of a large circle of friends.

CHAPTER IV.

Mendelssohn becomes the Director of the Gewandhaus Concerts at Leipzig — His strict Training of the Orchestra. — His Efforts to educate a refined Taste for Classical Music. — His first Appearance with the Bâton. — The Concerts under his Direction. — Ferdinand David comes to Leipzig.

WITH his coming to Leipzig (which was his home from September, 1835, to 1844, and from 1845 to the end of his life), begins the fourth period of his career, — an epoch full of the richest, most varied, most untiring activity for himself, and one of such splendor in the musical life of Leipzig as can hardly be expected to come again. He directed the Gewandhaus concerts personally from 1835 to 1841; producing during this time a great number of master-pieces of enduring excellence, yet compelled to earn his way into public favor step by step. He knew how to command the resources of the place perfectly in orchestra, dilettanti, and chorus singers; to bear with them with the greatest patience; to stimulate them all into activity; and thus to obtain effects almost unequalled until then. For he did not confine himself to the almost purely classical training necessary for the Gewandhaus concerts, but improved every opportunity to influence the public taste; so that

it may be truly said, that, in the practice of one art, he developed an appreciation of all, and gave to the life of the cultivated people of Leipzig a higher ideal by the pure moral and truly æsthetic influence which he exercised over them. He did this not only by an always admirable selection of the music to be performed at the concerts, but also by awakening, through his superb direction of the orchestra, a taste on the part of the public for the works of the later great masters; as, for example, the "Ninth Symphony" of Beethoven. He not only cultivated a relish for the historical development of music, but he summoned the mighty spirits of the past to the help and delight of the present age, and often combined the entire musical resources of Leipzig in rendering some of their master-pieces. We leave this general sketch of his influence in that city, to enter a little upon some of the details of his life there.

The 4th of October, 1835, was an eventful day for the musical history of Leipzig; for, on that day, Mendelssohn assumed the direction of the Gewandhaus concerts. "On his appearance," we find in a record of the concert, published in a musical journal, "the murmur of applause which ran through the crowded audience testified to the welcome which Leipzig gave him. The universal favorite, Mendelssohn's overture, 'A Calm at Sea and a Happy Voyage,' (*Meeresstille, &c.*) was given as gently and gracefully as the public expected from a

director so skilful at the opening of his course with us." It may be interesting to many readers to know what other pieces were also given on this occasion. There were a scena and aria in E major by Weber, Spohr's "Violin Concerto, No. 11," Introduction to Cherubini's "Ali Baba;" and, for the second part, Beethoven's "B-flat Major Symphony," which was given with a precision till then unknown in Leipzig. Mendelssohn had carefully studied the piece, and directed it in person, — an arrangement new to us, but of eminent propriety. There had been no lack of excellence in former days, when the concert-master and the first violin had the direction of Beethoven's symphonies; yet of that nice shading, that exact adaptation of each instrument, that perfect harmony of all instruments, attained under Mendelssohn's direction, there had been no conception. The performance of the "B-flat Symphony" — that ethereal, soulful music — was one of the master effects gained by Mendelssohn as a director. Every new rendering threw new light upon it; so that the listeners were compelled to say, "So perfectly performed we never heard it before." It was given the last time under his direction in the winter of 1846–7.

On the 9th of October, Moscheles, who had come to Leipzig (perhaps on Mendelssohn's invitation), gave a concert, which was crowded, in which he played his 'Hommage à Haendel," and at which the overture,

"The Hebrides" was given. At the second subscription concert, Mozart's "E-flat Major Symphony" was played more beautifully than ever at Leipzig before. At the fourth subscription concert, Mendelssohn played his own noble "G-minor Concerto." He was received at the very outset with applause; which strengthened, however, with every movement, as the admiration increased at the ease, elegance, and grace of his playing. Mendelssohn's loyalty towards the great musical classics appeared in a manner very grateful to the audience, when, in the fifth concert, he brought out Haydn's "Symphony, No. 4." The sixth concert was thoroughly classic, — Gluck's overture to "Iphigenia in Aulis;" an aria from Paer, with violin obligato; chorus and first finale from "Titus," and Beethoven's "Heroic Symphony." This auspicious opening was sadly interrupted, towards the end of November, by the death of Mendelssohn's father. The son mourned deeply over his loss, which was indeed a very severe one, as those who now know the father through his letters to his son are aware.

About this time, Mendelssohn renewed his intimacy with a friend of his childhood; — Ferdinand David, afterwards so well known, not merely to the Leipzig public, but to the musical world. Born in the same house with Mendelssohn, he had early lost his parents; and had been taken under the guardianship of the elder

Mendelssohn, and educated mainly in his family. The talents of the two boys expanded side by side. David had adopted the violin, and had early manifested wonderful skill on that instrument. He first tried his fortune in Hamburg, his native city; but soon turned back to Berlin, and first found a recognition in the Royal Theatre, where his playing won great regard. An invitation from a gentleman of high position in Dorpat drew him next to that place. After being separated from each other many years, the friends met at the family mansion in Berlin. It was a most happy incident for Mendelssohn to meet such a friend at such a time. They joined their fortunes, and turned back to Leipzig, to be associated till death sundered the bond. David entered upon a brilliant career as a violinist there, and always stood shoulder to shoulder with his friend in the furtherance of all his plans.

CHAPTER V.

Mendelssohn finishes his "St. Paul." — Its first Performance. — Changes in the Work. — He directs a Festival at Frankfort. — Enjoyment in that City. — Meets his future Wife. — Tribute to her Memory. — Sea-bathing. — Returns to his Place at Leipzig. — Concerts there. — Mendelssohn as a Director. — Pleasant Surprise at one of the Concerts. — William Sterndale Bennett visits Leipzig. — "St. Paul" sung there. — Brilliant Effect of the Work. — Analysis of "St. Paul."

DURING all this activity in Mendelssohn's external life, his productive talent was no less eagerly engaged. His great oratorio of "St. Paul," begun in Düsseldorf, was finished at Leipzig during the course of this winter. The author seems to have been bound by a promise to produce this work at a musical festival of Lower-Rhine artists, to be held at Düsseldorf. At any rate, the chorus-parts were engraved at Bonn by Simrock, after the piece was completed, and sent to Düsseldorf. Under the direction of Julius Rietz, the rehearsals were carried on with great enthusiasm; and when, on the 8th of May, 1836, Mendelssohn arrived in person he found the work all ready for the public performance. On Whitsunday, the 22d of May, occurred the introduction of the oratorio of "St. Paul" to the world. The solos were Madame Fischer-Achten, Miss Grabau (now

Madame Bünau), Messieurs Schmetzer and Wersing, the latter as St. Paul. As a curious fact, it may be remarked, that the two false witnesses in the unimportant duet at the opening, "We have heard him utter blasphemies," could not find their voices when their turn came to sing. The success of the piece was decidedly brilliant. Mendelssohn's sister, herself only and hardly second to her brother in musical genius, — Fanny Hensel, whose tragic death her brother Felix was soon called to deplore, — and the younger brother, Paul Mendelssohn, had come from Berlin to be present at the first performance of "St. Paul." On the second day of the festival, Beethoven's "Ninth Symphony," and the first overture to "Leonora," then freshly produced, Mozart's "Davidde Penitente," and a great psalm in E flat, by Handel. On the third day, Mendelssohn played, with Ferdinand David, the great "A-minor Sonata" of Beethoven; and as the music was not at hand, and this piece had not been specially indicated for the occasion, he played from memory. The Committee of Direction signified their gratification at Mendelssohn's signal success by presenting him with a magnificent copy of the oratorio of "St. Paul," adorned with elegant drawings of the leading scenes in the sacred drama, executed by the first artists of Düsseldorf, — Schrötter, Hübner, Steinbrück, Mücke; to which one was added by Mendelssohn's brother-in-law, the court-painter Hensel.

After the first representation of "St. Paul," Mendelssohn made so many and so great changes in the work, that the great number of voices was unnecessary. Ten pieces he left entirely out; and the first great aria in B minor, he reduced to about a third of its original length. On the other hand, he composed, some days before the festival, the short soprano solo in F major, in the second part; not to speak of innumerable smaller changes in the body of the work.

After this festival was past, Mendelssohn went to Frankfort-on-the-Main, in order to direct at the public celebration of the "Cecilia" (*Cäcilien-Verein*) in the place of his friend Schelble, who had been very ill, and was trying the restorative effect of sea-bathing. This society afforded great delight to Mendelssohn, in consequence of its large number of fine voices, and the secure mastery which it had acquired of the most difficult motets of Sebastian Bach. The city and suburbs of Frankfort, which he had seen and known only as a child, or when he flitted through it on his journeys, pleased him exceedingly. He enjoyed himself so well there, that he has left on record, in a sportive letter, that, if he should stay much longer in Frankfort, he should certainly become a devoted gardener. During his cheerful occupations there, he discovered one blossom so fair that he took it to himself, to adorn the garden of his whole future life. He was introduced by a friend to the

Jeanrenaud Family, and there made the acquaintance of the youngest daughter, Cecilia, who afterwards became his wife. When the nuptial band united them, there was no one who thought that it was so soon to be sundered. She was worthy of such a husband; and she showed it not only through their whole married life, but most of all by the heroic fortitude with which she bore her loss.*

On the advice of his physician at Leipzig, Mendelssohn took a journey to Scheveningen, after his duties at Frankfort were concluded, in order to enjoy a course of sea-bathing. There he remained for some time; and with nerves much strengthened, and his general health improved, he turned back, in the autumn of the same year (1836), to renew his work at Leipzig. On the 2d of October, we see him re-instated in his old place as director of the concerts at the Gewandhaus. He opened them with that overture to "Leonora" which we have just seen was brought out at the Düsseldorf Festival; which was soon repeated at an extra concert given by Lipinski, with the finale from Cherubini's "Water-carrier," "O God! my eye deceives me not," and Beethoven's "A-major Symphony." Besides this, Mademoiselle Grabau sang an aria, with chorus, from Mercadante; and David played a new concertino of his own composition. A number of pieces, the chief of which was the

* She died in September, 1853.

"A-major Symphony," were given with great applause. At the second subscription concert, at repeated request, Beethoven's "Heroic Symphony" was given. It was, as we learn from an account written at the time, played in the most faultless manner, in one spirit from the first note to the last; and this master-work of the greatest of masters left nothing that could be wished. It was applauded at the end of every movement, and its delicious tones echoed in the memory long after the piece was ended. At the third concert, a symphony in B major was brought out, one of the genial Haydn's; and at the fourth was played that royal second overture to "Leonora" (with the flourish of trumpets), and so finely, that not only was the applause unusually hearty and sustained, but the whole piece had to be played from first to last; an honor not often showed in that hall. In these concerts there was sometimes given, as is now often the case, a new symphony, carefully studied, by some living composer. At the concert of which I write, it was the "Sinfonia Appassionata" (so successful in Vienna), by Franz Lachner.

Meanwhile, there was an admirable opportunity in Leipzig to learn the marvellous power of Mendelssohn as a leader, and to test at the same time the extent of musical resources in that art-loving city. "Israel in Egypt," that master-piece of Handel's, whose great effects are in the chorus parts, was studied. Upon these

choruses Mendelssohn began to work, having rehearsal follow rehearsal with great rapidity; and, as the singers were promptness and loyalty itself, he soon wove the most discordant elements into unity, and brought about a very perfect result. He did a good service in other respects; for he wrote out in full notes Handel's figured organ bass, which is not read with ease by organists of our day. On Nov. 7, 1836, it was magnificently brought out in St. Paul's Church, with a chorus of more than two hundred and fifty voices, assisted by the organ and a strong orchestra. The success of the oratorio well repaid the patient care and skill of preparation. The great interest in the work was manifested by the immense audience which filled the spacious church. Thus Leipzig celebrated its first great Musical Festival, and with no common splendor.

Of the other musical performances and concerts of this winter when Mendelssohn was the conductor, and which were therefore directed with matchless skill, I will refer to only one. It was the last concert of 1836, and took place on the 12th of December. It was to have been on Thursday; but out of love to Mendelssohn, and out of regard to his yearning after Frankfort, it was given on the preceding Monday. After Mendelssohn had played, with rare skill, Beethoven's "E-flat Major Concerto" for the first part, and closed in a storm of applause, the second part opened with his own "A

Calm at Sea, and a Happy Voyage;" then followed some solo performances, and then the happily chosen finale of "Fidelio." The reader will remember that the great chorus of "Fidelio" has the words,—

> "Whoe'er a lovely bride has won,
> Let him now join our gladsome song."

Mendelssohn, being called to the piano by the repeated applause which followed this chorus, seated himself, and began to extemporize on the theme, working it up in the most brilliant manner. It seemed like a great family party, to which he had invited the guests to share in his own private joy. Every one who had a heart rejoiced with him. All knew what his errand to Frankfort was.

It is also worthy of remark, that, this same winter, a friend of Mendelssohn, remarkable both for his performances on the piano and also for his own compositions, visited Germany, and awakened much enthusiasm by his brilliant talents. William Sterndale Bennett had come from England in order to study musical composition under Mendelssohn for a season. He displayed the value of the instructions he received in a delightful piano-forte concerto in C minor, and also in a very attractive overture, written in Mendelssohn's manner, but still pleasantly remembered. Later, we heard from the young composer a second overture, "The Wood Nymph," which was one of the most charming pictures

of natural scenery ever presented, and captivated all hearers. And, lastly, it may be remarked, that, at the last subscription concert of this season, Beethoven's grand "Ninth Symphony" was given, even more perfectly, if possible, than at its first performance.

And now had come the time when the tried and proved musical resources of Leipzig could be fitly put to a fine test of their reach and compass; and that was on the occasion of bringing out Mendelssohn's oratorio of "St. Paul," now widely known, and in many countries. The chorus began their rehearsals in February, 1837; and every thing that the director's skill, zeal, and thoroughness could accomplish was done, and all that the thorough co-operation of the singers could effect was conjoined with even greater spirit and willingness than at the representation of Handel's "Israel in Egypt." The noble choruses and chorals, although accompanied merely by a wretched piano, wrought powerfully upon the choir, and, despite the repeated necessary rehearsals, raised public expectation to its height. Most impressive of all were the choral, "Awake! the Voice calls," whose imposing effect, with the trombone accompaniment, could only be conjectured when sung to the piano; the sublime chorus, "Arise! the light breaks, thy light comes;" and the voice from heaven, in the blended soprano and alto, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" But scarcely less effective and moving

were all those passages which bear the stamp of a Christian's joy, of pious self-renunciation, and untroubled confidence: as, for example, that first chorus, which rang out like a pæan of victory, "Lord, thou art God, who hast made heaven and earth;" that choral, full of inward humility and the love of God, "To thee, O God! will I commit myself;" and those two precious, sadly joyous choruses, "Behold, we count them happy that endure," and "The Lord will wipe away all tears from their eyes, for he hath spoken it;" the first of which, with its swelling waves of sound and its wonderful power, moved every heart to its depths. There was not in the whole oratorio a single chorus which we did not take delight in singing; and, Mendelssohn understood, as hardly any other director has equally done, how to make his singers sing with their whole souls. This appeared in the perfect execution of the pianos, only breathed out; the crescendos and diminuendos, whose possibilities, significance, and effect he first revealed to us.

After such thorough drill, not only in the choruses, but in the solo and the orchestral parts, the public performance of the work, which took place on the 16th of March, 1837, could not fail to be successful in the highest degree. It was a disappointment that the bass soloist, who was to take the part of St. Paul, was obliged to be absent in consequence of illness; but the

gentleman who took his place sustained the part well In the recitative, Mademoiselle Grabau was especially excellent. I do not remember who the other soloists were. The choir consisted of over three hundred voices, with a correspondingly large orchestra. I must let another speak for me regarding the general effect; for I was one of the performers on the occasion. The critic of the "Musical Gazette" says, "Under the skilful leading of the composer, the great orchestra did its work masterly; and the choruses, already thoroughly studied under Director Dr. Mendelssohn Bartholdy, were given in noble style, so bright, powerful, full, round, and shaded to every nicety of expression, that I never saw the effect in so large a choir equalled. Whoever was present at the representation of that brilliant work will be compelled to confess, that the larger share of the credit which the choir gained for itself is owing to the matchless skill of the conductor and the power of the piece itself. With simple justice has the management of the subscription concerts offered its public thanks to the honored leader, the soloists, the orchestra, its conductor David, and the entire body of singers, for their unwearied patience in preparation, and their brilliant performance on the night of representation."

To enter on a close and critical analysis of a work which has made the circuit of the civilized world, and has everywhere received recognition as a great work of

art, is not in place here: it does not come within my domain as Mendelssohn's biographer. Only some explanatory remarks are suitable here. From a strictly æsthetical point of view, the "St. Paul" may have many defects. Unquestionably, the personal agency of Paul at the martyrdom of Stephen is kept somewhat in the background; and the second part of the oratorio is inferior to the first in dramatic interest. But the main thought which runs through the whole work is too high and broad to be linked by the tie of a personal interest to any single man: it is the glorification of Christianity, with its humility, its joy in living and dying for the Lord, in contrast with the blind self-righteousness of Judaism, and the mere sensuous morality of the Heathen schools; it is the contrast, or rather the struggle, of the last two with the former, and the victory of the light and love of the gospel,—the light eternal, the love divine. This thought is made incarnate in the persons of Stephen, Paul, and Barnabas; and it is concentrated at that point which is really the central point of interest to the oratorio,—the conversion of St. Paul. Mendelssohn has been reproached because he represented the voice of the Lord by a choir of women's voices, or angels perhaps: it would have been better, they say, if simulated by a powerful blast on the trombone. But that very golden mean between the sharp distinctness of a man's voice and the inarticulate sound of a mere

instrument seems to me a masterly conception of the composer; for it transcends the common, the expected, and becomes, to say the least, unique; if not supernatural, yet not unreasonable. Nor does this objection hold good in point of fact; for no one who ever heard the oratorio has failed to notice the striking effect of those female voices on every hearer of susceptibility. Upon whom has that sound not broken like the very voice of the presence of God? And how solemnly deep becomes the impression at the massive chorus, "Arise! the light is breaking!" which cleaves the darkness like a thunderbolt from heaven! What an impressive warning to change his ways in the statuesque choral which follows. "Awake! the voice doth call!" and what a pæan of victory to come in that majestic passage, the trombone accompanying every line, which declares the glory of the ancient Zion, new glorified by the light of the later dispensation! How powerful the contrast in the choruses of the Christian, the Jewish, and the Pagan faiths! Compare only the chorus, "Behold, we count them happy which endure," and "Oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom and the knowledge of God!" with the chorus of Jews, "This man ceases not to utter blasphemy;" and, "Here is the Lord's temple! — ye men of Israel, help;" and these again with the choruses, "The gods have come to us in the likeness of men;" and, "Be gracious to us, ye gods," — and you will not fail to

see how sharply delineated and discriminated are these three faiths. A peculiar, and at the same time a beautiful feature of the oratorio is given by the chorals, which are always so suitably introduced to add solemnity, and yet a kindly grace, to the work. They give a truly Christian character to the whole; yet the effect of those perfect pieces of harmony is subduing and soothing. Doubtless there are many to whom church music is a novelty, so to speak, who hear these chorals, and wonder that strains so sweet and elevating are sung all around them, and have remained unknown to them. It may be that this musical effect is largely to be ascribed to the great Bach; but does the composer who a hundred years later restores the Christian choral, with its depth of feeling and tender spirituality, with the attractions of modern art, deserve less praise? Lastly, it is impossible to overrate the skill with which the great author has united words, taken only from the Bible, into a round and full historical painting, and has thus solved one of the greatest practical difficulties. And although, in my opinion, the chief attractions of this oratorio lie in the choruses and chorals, yet there is no lack of merit in the solos. The recitatives are beautifully distinct; and the two arias of Paul, the passage, "Destroy them, Lord God of Sabaoth," and the penitential strain, "God be gracious to me according to thy loving-kindness," could not more finely

combine dramatic effect with strict adherence to the church style. Again, in the soprano aria, "Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets;" in the arioso for the alto, "Yet the Lord is mindful of his own;" in the aria of Paul, "I thank thee, O Lord!" — no one will fail to see the union of the truest Christian feeling with the most artistic musical form. The whole oratorio is, in one word, *edifying*, and that in the deepest sense: it strengthens, it exalts, it ennobles the spirit by its happy combination of religious sentiment with noble harmony. Where the eternally *true* and the eternally *beautiful* lock hands together, there is the highest consummation of all possible excellences that art can furnish, and there must be the happiest results.

CHAPTER VI.

Mendelssohn's Marriage. — New Works. — He directs the "St. Paul" at Birmingham, England. — Leipzig Concerts. — Clara Novello. — A brilliant Winter. — Composition of the Forty-second Psalm. — Analysis of the Music. — New Music. — The Historical Concerts instituted by him. — He directs the Cologne Festival. — Repetition of "St. Paul" at Leipzig.

ADORNED with the fresh laurel-wreath which the production of "St. Paul" in Leipzig had won for him, and not figuratively merely, but literally, — for a laurel wreath was laid upon his music-stand by admiring friends, — Mendelssohn hurried to Frankfort to blend the laurel of fame with the myrtle of love. In the spring of 1837, his union with Cecilia Jeanrenaud, the second daughter of a deceased clergyman of Dresden, was solemnly celebrated. "Ah! those were pleasant days." In August of the same year, in company with his bride, whose beauty and amiability made a universally favorable impression, he visited his old friends in Düsseldorf, with whom, with the exception of Immermann, he remained on terms of the greatest cordiality. He was very fond of Düsseldorf. He himself confessed that his visits to that place were among the happiest events of his life. He was always on the move, was in the brightest spirits, and gratified all wishes to hear him

play, weary as it might make him. Here, to please and honor him, "St. Paul" was brought out under the direction of his pupil and friend, Rietz. He himself could show to his friends, as the fruit of his recent activ ity, the forty-second Psalm (Op. 42), a new piano concerto with orchestral accompaniment in D minor (Op. 40), and the violin quartet in E minor (Op. 44, No. 2), all in manuscript. The bright days after his marriage had not interfered with his productive power, nor diminished the affluent gifts of his genius. From Düsseldorf he sent to Simrock at Bonn, all ready for the press, the three motets for women's voices, partly composed at Rome. From Düsseldorf he went, without his wife, over to England, where he was expected to direct the bringing-out of "St. Paul" at the great Musical Festival at Birmingham from the 19th to the 22d of September. The oratorio was given the second day, in the presence of an immense concourse of hearers, but with some omissions in the second part. The work was received with the greatest favor: the choruses were sung with unrivalled power, though not always carefully enough. Mendelssohn's appearance in the orchestra, towards the end of the piece, was greeted with a storm of applause. In September of the same year, "St. Paul" was produced for the first time at Berlin.

On his return from England, we see Mendelssohn take his wonted place as director of the concerts given

in the Gewandhaus, and received, at his first appear ance in public, with a very kindly greeting. The Jubilee overture by Weber, a chorus by Haydn, Beethoven's C-minor symphony, the song from "The Freischütz," "Wie nahte mir der Schlummer," sung by Louise Schlegel (a very gifted pupil of Director Pohlenz), and a new concerto composed and played by David, opened the series of winter entertainments in a most excellent and attractive manner. It would weary the reader were I to enter into a full specification of the performances of that winter, any further than as they were connected with Mendelssohn himself. One excellent fruit of his visit to England, so far as Germany is concerned, was the visit of an extremely talented, cultivated, and prepossessing artiste, — Miss Clara Novello; who, however, sang but seven times in Leipzig, but left us filled with regret at her too-speedy departure. She was the daughter of a music-publisher in London, for whom, as early as 1832, Mendelssohn had composed a "Morning Service." Her bell-like, silver voice, her perfect training, and her charming appearance, won all hearts. The concerts were more crowded than ever. She made her first appearance at the fifth subscription concert, in the arias, "Ecco il punto, O Vitellia!" from "Titus," and "Casta Diva" from "Norma;" and, at her last appearance, she sang Beethoven's great scena, "Abscheulicher! wo eilst du hin?" At

the third subscription concert, Mendelssohn played his new piano-concerto in D minor ("Allegro appassionato, Adagio, and Scherzo giojoso," as he then called the closing passage), and, of course, won the most enthusiastic applause. At the second quartet entertainment, Mendelssohn produced a new quartet, — the one in E minor (Op. 44) which he had taken to Düsseldorf; and the second and last movements were received with special favor. The second was encored. At the concert in behalf of poor and sick musicians, the overture to the "Midsummer Night's Dream" was given, and Mendelssohn himself played his "Capriccio brillant" in B minor (Op. 22). During all this varied round of activities, he yet found time to bring together the musical resources of Leipzig for the purpose of producing one of the great master-pieces of the past. After repeated rehearsals, Handel's "Messiah" was given at St. Paul's Church. The number of singers in the choruses was equal to that on former similar occasions. The solos were sustained by artists of the highest excellence. This master-piece was rendered according to Mozart's arrangement; and in several passages rather choral-like, and at the close of certain choruses, the effect was heightened by the full organ accompaniment. The performance of the choir, soloists, and orchestra, was one of the finest ever witnessed; and the impression left by the whole work was wholly satisfactory.

The year 1838 brought to light another product of Mendelssohn's Muse. The music of the forty-second Psalm, which he had shown to his Düsseldorf friends, was sung for the first time in public at the tenth subscription concert, and displayed at once the character of a wholly unique and artistic work. Never has the soul's inmost yearning after God been spoken out in tones more searching and tender. After the chorus has uttered this passionate longing in those noble words, so grandly set to music in this piece, "As the hart pants after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul for thee, O God!" a delicate soprano solo, "For my soul thirsteth," takes up a slow strain full of the inmost tenderness of longing. Then follows a chorus of women's voices, justifying, as it were, her who has just sung, and giving more express utterance to what all feel in the words, "For I had gone with the multitude; I went with them to the house of God," — a passage which, by its march-movement, suggests a light-hearted walk to the temple of God. Then comes a chorus of men's voices, uttering words both of admonition and consolation: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? hope thou in God." But that first plaintive woman's cry, justifying its very wail by its eager desire to enjoy the presence of God, is heard in yet sharper and distincter tones: "O my God! my soul is cast down within me: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." Then strikes

in, accompanied by stringed instruments, a noble quartet of men's voices, full of consolation and truthful faith: "Yet the Lord will command his loving-kindness in the day-time; and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life." Yet with their voices still mingles that plaintive soprano strain, almost wailing, in its extreme sadness; till, at the end, the whole choir of men and women take up the opening passage again with the full confidence of belief and hope in God, and close with an ascription of praise to the Lord God of Israel. The whole makes a brief but complete religious tone-drama, as it may be called. Yet those who have not heard Mendelssohn's music of the forty-second Psalm cannot imagine how beautiful it is from this imperfect sketch: it is rather for those who may by its help call back in memory pleasures which they have enjoyed before in listening to its wondrous harmony. And these will confess that not easily can a smoother and more pleasing movement, musical expression better adapted to words, and nobler melodies, be found, than are combined in this composition. The first performance, particularly the choruses and the soprano part, sustained by Miss Novello, was admirable.

Later in the course of these concerts, some interesting new symphonies were given, and another less generally attractive Psalm of Mendelssohn, written earlier, — the

hundred and fifteenth.* Mendelssohn's next great step was to propose a series of concerts, indicating the historical development of music. On the 15th of February, they were opened with a selection from the works of Sebastian Bach, Handel, Gluck, and Viotti. After a suite by Bach, followed Handel's hymn, "Great is the Lord;" then a sonata in E major (No. 3) for piano-forte and violin, played by Mendelssohn and David. The second part was made up of the overture, introduction, and first scene of the "Iphigenia in Tauris," by Gluck; followed by a concerto for the violin, from Viotti, played exceedingly well by David. The second of these concerts was from the works of Haydn, Cimarosa, Naumann, and Righini. The programme of this concert is too interesting to be wholly excluded from these pages: overture to "Tigranes," and aria from "Armida," by Righini; overture to Cimarosa's "Matrimonio Segreto;" trio by Haydn for piano, violin, and violoncello (C major), played by Mendelssohn, David, and Grenser; introduction, recitative, and closing scena of the first part of Haydn's "Creation." The second part was composed of a quintet and chorus from "I Pellegrini" by Naumann, and the "Parting" symphony by Haydn. The third of these concerts was made up of selections from Mozart, Salieri,

* In the concert for the poor, given Feb. 21, 1838, the ninety-fifth Psalm, with Mendelssohn's music, was given for the first time; an excellent piece, sung with full chorus.

Méhul, and Andreas Romberg; among other things, a hitherto wholly unknown quartet from Mozart's "Zaida," and an ensemble from Méhul's "Uthal," an opera, which the author had composed, at Napoleon's command, from a subject in "Ossian," and entirely without violins. The shining feature of this concert was a piano-forte concerto by Mozart in C minor, played by Mendelssohn. The overture to the "Magic Flute" was also exceedingly well given. The programme of the fourth of these concerts was selected from Vogler, Beethoven, and Von Weber. The overture to Vogler's "Samori," overture to Weber's "Freischütz," and the hunters' chorus from "Euryanthe," Beethoven's great "Violin Concerto" and the "Pastoral Symphony," were the most striking features of this evening's entertainment, which brought this course of historical concerts to a worthy close. That they not only awakened in the public an interest in the history of music, but also largely promoted a genuine musical taste among the Leipzig people, needs hardly be said.

Thus, through Mendelssohn's efforts mainly, the winter was passed in the enjoyment of the richest treasures which music could afford the people of that art-loving city which was his home. During the next summer, he enjoyed no rest. He went again to the Rhine, — this time to assume the direction of the Cologne Musical Festival. The "Joshua" of Handel was selected as the chief piece; and for this, as he had done for the

"Solomon" before, he resorted to the organ as a leading auxiliary. The whole festival was most brilliant. The separation from his wife seemed to be a great trial to Mendelssohn. He was somewhat sad; but yet, on the third day, he played his "Serenade and Allegro giojoso." His true friend and fellow-artist, David, accompanied him to the Rhine.

No sooner had he returned to Leipzig, than the liveliest wish was expressed on all sides that the "St. Paul" should be repeated. Mendelssohn showed a willingness to comply with the general desire, and conducted the rehearsals with his accustomed care. But, when the day of the public performance arrived, — the 15th of September, 1838, — Mendelssohn himself was unable to be present; being attacked by the measles. David was compelled to take his place; and he conducted so much in the spirit of the great author of the work, that the effect was even deeper on some hearers than it had been the first time. It is to be mentioned, that after the choral, No. 9, "To thee, O Lord! do I commit myself," a new alto aria had been introduced, — "Thou who bringest us to destruction, and sayest, Return, ye children of men." The leading soprano solos this time were sustained by a very lovely singer, who, though now occupying a high position in distinguished society, still continued to dedicate her remarkable gifts to the art of music, especially to the Muse of Mendelssohn; and who remains

his best interpreter to this day. After this representation of "Paulus," a number took place in Leipzig, the last of which was directed by the author, and occurred on Good Friday, 1847. No other great musical work has ever gained such speedy recognition as the "St. Paul." In the history of music, the years 1837 and 1838 might be called the "St. Paul" years. A computation has been attempted of the number of places where this oratorio was sung within a year and a half, and the number of times it was sung; and it was found to be not less than fifty times in forty-one different cities. In Germany, in Poland, in Russia, in the Tyrol and Switzerland, in Denmark, in Holland, in England, in America, everywhere, "St. Paul" was given, and in some places two or three times.

CHAPTER VII.

The Leipzig Concerts. — Mrs. Alfred Shaw. — A memorable Musical Winter — Mendelssohn conducts the Spring Festival at Düsseldorf. — The next Winter's Concerts — The Hundred and Fourteenth Psalm: its Musical Effects. — New Instrumental Music.

THE time for the author of a piece held in such estimation to be taken away had not yet come. Providence watched over him: he soon recovered from his sickness. The direction of the first subscription concert was left to his friend David; but at the second we find Mendelssohn in his old place, more a favorite than ever, and received with the greatest joy. He opened this concert with his overture to "Fingal's Cave." In the third concert, after the enthusiastically received and encored overture to the "Freischütz," an English singer appeared, for whose advent in Leipzig we were indebted to Mendelssohn, — Mrs. Alfred Shaw, a lady of imposing figure, endowed with a remarkably clear and full voice. The noble simplicity of her style, and her thorough conception of the subject, particularly in songs of deep feeling, made her appearance before a Leipzig audience very acceptable. She sang first a recitative and an aria by Rossini, "Amici, in ogni evento m'affido a voi," and the

"Addio" of Mozart. Her stay till the 28th of January gave us a continual round of enjoyments. In the most tender and touching manner she sang the aria from Handel's "Messiah," "He was despised and rejected of men;" and indeed her selection of subjects was always the happiest possible. But this circumstance arose primarily from the admirable works chosen by Mendelssohn as the basis for the concerts. The reader who goes over the programme of that winter's entertainments is astonished at the wealth of classic pieces, and their tasteful collocation in relation to each other. Handel, Gluck, Haydn, Beethoven, Mozart, Cherubini, Weber, Spohr, Rossini, alternate in the list, yet not to the exclusion of the later and the latest masters in music. For example, new symphonies by Kalliwoda, Lachner, Möhring, and Dobrycinski were given, and the newly discovered symphony by Franz Schubert (C major), which took the palm from all the rest. As an example of a genuine classic programme, which yet did not lack the charm of the greatest variety, take this one: overture to "Iphigenia," by Gluck; chorus, "The dust's vain cares," by Haydn; "O salutaris hostia," by Cherubini, sung by Mrs. Shaw; variations for the violin, by Lipinski, played by Ulrich; cavatina from "Romeo and Juliet," by Zingarelli, sung by Mrs. Shaw; symphony in A major, by Beethoven. Although the power of selecting lay in the management, yet it was really Mendels-

sohn's judgment that controlled the decision. As a special advantage of these concerts, may be mentioned this, — that a great number of fine pieces, from operas which were unfortunately almost neglected on the stage, were thus brought into notice; for instance, the delightful sextet from "Cosi fan Tutte," the trio with chorus from "Medea," the Polonaise, trio, and chorus from Cherubini's "Lodoiska." Sometimes they were taken from well-known, excellent operas; for instance, the first finale from "Euryanthe," the trio and quartet from "Oberon," the aria and first finale from the same, and the second finale from "Leonora."

From Mendelssohn there were given this winter the overtures, "Fingal's Cave," and "A Calm at Sea and Happy Voyage;" the overture to "St. Paul," with the recitative and aria from the same oratorio, "And he drew with the throng towards Damascus" (given at the New-Year's concert, together with Beethoven's C-minor Symphony); an overture to "Ruy Blas;" and the Forty-second Psalm, — the last two at the twentieth subscription concert, when Schubert's symphony in C major, and the "Spring" from Haydn's "Seasons," were brought out for the first time.

In the spring of 1839, Mendelssohn, in conjunction with Julius Rietz, conducted the Düsseldorf Festival. A combination of distinguished singers, such as Fassmann, Clara Novello, &c., made this festival one of the most

brilliant ever known. Handel's "Messiah," and Beethoven's Mass in C, were given as the chief pieces. Here Mendelssohn first became acquainted with Sophia Schloss, who so finely sustained the alto solos in the "Messiah" and the Mass of Beethoven, that he engaged her for the next winter at Leipzig. Of Mendelssohn's own works, the Forty-second Psalm was given. On the third day of the festival, he played his D-minor Concerto, and accompanied many songs on the pianoforte.

In the winter of 1839 and 1840, he again directed the Leipzig concerts, with the same care and the same success which had been so marked in the previous winter. Besides Sophia Schloss, Eliza Meerti was engaged, a Belgian lady, who united a solid style and an agreeable voice with French ease and elegance. A number of new gifts from Mendelssohn's Muse delighted us that winter, besides the treasures of past time. The concert in celebration of the great Reformation, given on Wednesday, the 30th of October, 1839, was opened with a new adaptation to music, by Mendelssohn, of Luther's hymn, "In mercy grant us peace, O Lord!" The purest and deepest spirituality which can accompany prayer is the character of this noble piece, as Mendelssohn gave it to the world. Had this music, as well as that written to Luther's noble hymn, "In the midst of life," appeared in Rome, we should have seen

in it, not a simple fortuitous circumstance, but the rise of a true Protestant spirit (not indeed in the ordinary use of language), — a spirit of protest against the mere sensuous coloring which the Catholic Church gives to all its ideas, as well as to its worship. But, whether on purpose or accidentally, the authorship of the piece was not avowed at the concert. If the taste of the musical public were to be put to the test, it might be said that it has not yet showed that it was always united on any point, — not thoroughly at one, so to speak, — as to any piece; and this production of Mendelssohn's was quietly, not to say coolly, received. Perhaps it was in consequence of the deeply religious character of the piece; this kind of music does not usually win much outward demonstration from a Leipzig audience; but so much is certain, — the authorship of the piece was then unknown, except to the initiated few.

It ought not to be passed by without mention, that on the 25th of December, in the same year, "St. Paul" was brought out in Munich for the first time. It made the same deep impression as everywhere.

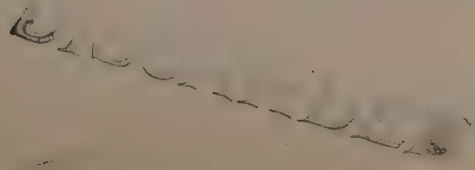
The year 1840, one of the most fruitful in its additions to Mendelssohn's well-merited and always ascending fame, gave us as the first-fruits of his genius a new and great production. It was the Hundred and fourteenth Psalm, "When Israel out of Egypt came," which he composed for full chorus and orchestra. It was given

for the first time at the New-Year's concert; and although in character and treatment wholly different from the Forty-second Psalm, yet, in its way, it is almost as great. The selection of this Psalm, one of the finest, if not the very finest, of Old-Testament lyrics, was a very happy conception of the composer; and how skilfully has he brought out in music the praise and the majesty of God! In one great flood of inspiration, peaceful, and yet overpowering, the double chorus strikes in, "What ailed thee, O thou sea! that thou fleddest? — thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back?" With the greatest sublimity the answer comes back, "Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord;" and the whole widens at the close into the grand fugue, "Hallelujah! sing to the Lord," which seems like the very ocean of eternity. Let the reader imagine to himself one of those psalms of the temple, in which the choir, accompanied by the trombones of the Levites, announced the glory of the Lord from the holy place, accompanied by all the helps of contemporaneous art, and in the most spiritual (i.e., the least sensuous) form, and he has a conception of the effect of this masterpiece, in which the musical expression is perfectly adapted to every word; and yet the whole stream of sound flows in a single channel.

In an entirely different domain of his art was the third great work which the unwearied genius of Men-

delssohn gave us that winter. It was the charming trio in D minor for piano-forte, violin, and violoncello (Op. 49), first played in public by himself, David, and Wittmann, the 1st of February of that year. This piece expressed in its first strain that ardent feeling, that almost passionate power, which was more especially the mark of Mendelssohn's genius than of any modern artist. The andante con moto tranquillo, which follows, is filled with that equally inimitable longing and subdued and plaintive joy. The scherzo plays with the charm of infantile grace; while the finale, in its allegro assai appassionato, satisfies and charms the ear with its strong tones and balanced rhythm. The whole work is a true mirror of Mendelssohn in his most spiritual-minded and deepest mood, a product of one of the happiest hours of his genius, uttering itself in perfect frankness and the most artistic form. It was received, of course, with the greatest applause.

It would be easy to recall and to speak with enthusiasm of many other musical enjoyments of that winter, which we owe to Mendelssohn. But I will, out of regard to the reader, confine myself to the most important; and simply record, that, on the 9th of January, all the four overtures to Beethoven's "Fidelio" were given under Mendelssohn's direction. It was a matter of interest to every friend of art to follow this greatest of all masters into the secret chambers of his genius.



and to see, as perhaps he had never before done, the greatness of the work, the majesty of the conception; and in no better way could he do this than under the guidance of an artist of kindred genius, and of equal ambition. And it was a proof of the thorough training of our Leipzig musical public, that these four overtures were not received with simple satisfaction, but were thoroughly enjoyed.

Of the first appearance of Liszt in Leipzig, which occurred in January of this year, and in which Mendelssohn had an honorable part in introducing him to favorable notice, I shall speak more fully in another place Let me only remark here, that during that same month, Fétis, at the first concert of the Conservatoire in Brussels, brought out, in conjunction with Beethoven's "Heroic Symphony" and the overture to Cherubini's "Anacreon," the overture to the "Midsummer Night's Dream," which wrought an immediate and powerful impression on the audience.

CHAPTER VIII.

The "Hymn of Praise." — Its Occasion, History, first Performance, Musical Character, and remarkable Success.

WE now arrive at a point in the career of Mendelssohn which was signalized by the production, and public performance under his own direction, of what must be considered, if not his greatest work, at least his most genial one, and the one which indicated the meridian splendor of his career. The occasion which called it forth was the fourth centennial celebration of the invention of printing, which, though observed with great demonstrations of respect throughout all the larger cities of Germany, was especially honored in Leipzig, — the place which had been built up by the new art, as it were; at any rate, whose reputation as the birthplace of books was identified with the history of printing. It was a theme of general rejoicing, that the care of the musical part was given into Mendelssohn's hands; and no one could fail to see that he entered upon the execution of this trust with eager hope. The first task was to procure a hymn which should be the text, as it were, for Mendelssohn's music, to be sung at the

unveiling of Guttenberg's statue on the public square, in the presence of the assembled thousands. This was furnished by Adolphus Prölsz, a teacher in the Gymnasium at Freiberg; and was a fine combination of qualities which are popular, and yet have a deep undertone of religious feeling.

Mendelssohn arranged it with trombone accompaniment. When the opening words, "Fatherland! within thy confines broke the dawning light," — so the opening ran, if my memory is correct, — were heard in the Music Hall at the first rehearsal, the heartiest applause arose among the performers as well as the invited guests. Nothing so simple, powerful, joyous, and unconstrained had been heard for a long time. During the rehearsal, I sat near the honored Rochlitz, and saw how the general enjoyment of the multitude was shared by him, and wrote itself out in legible lines upon his illumined face. He rejoiced as if over the dawn of a new day in art. A merry time it used to be, when the rehearsals were going on, to see the changing of positions, the shifting of seats and music-stools backwards and forwards, till the correct position was attained. Many will remember how, on the very day of the public performance, the slight form of Mendelssohn was seen moving nervously around to find just the right place for the trombonists, and how nearly he came to a fall from the platform. During that performance, the sing

ers were divided into two choirs, which sat at some distance from each other; one of them was conducted by David, and the other by Mendelssohn. The piece began with a choral, "With solemn hymn of praise," sung to the tune, "Honor to God alone in the highest." The song in memory of Guttenberg followed; then an allegro molto for tenor voices, "And God said, Let there be light, and there was light;" and, finally, a choral, sung to the tune, "Now thank God, all." This piece is not numbered among Mendelssohn's collected works, but was published among his latest productions by Breitkopf and Härtel. The same house issued also the Guttenberg Song, arranged as a solo. Looked at merely as a genuine German work, and entirely aside from the occasion which brought it forth, the latter ought to be known to every German. Yet its first production was somewhat of a disappointment. The number of singers was not enough to fill the almost cavernous hall in which the concert was given. To accomplish that, there were needed at least a thousand voices.

But this piece, excellent as it was, was only the prelude, so to speak, to the great work which was not only to give *éclat* to this Centennial Festival, but also to crown Mendelssohn's name with its highest honors, and fill the hearts of the thousands who heard it alike with admiration and profound emotion. The "Hymn of Praise," a great Symphony Cantata, written by Mendels-

sohn solely for this occasion, was publicly produced for the first time in St. Thomas' Church, Leipzig, the 25th of June, before a distinguished and highly appreciative audience. It was preceded by Von Weber's Jubilee Overture (which concludes with "God save the king") and the "Dettingen Te Deum" by Handel; and deep as was the impression conveyed by each of those masterpieces, yet that produced by the "Hymn of Praise" surpassed it. The reader will ask, "What was the main conception in Mendelssohn's mind? How did he grasp his theme, and link it to the occasion which gave it birth?" In answer, I say, He undertook to show the triumph, at the creation, of Light over Darkness. With his pious and believing heart, he could easily enter into that theme, and show with matchless power and skill the closing-in of those ancient foes, and the victory of Light, when Darkness cowered, and ignobly shrank away. And nothing could be finer than this, — to celebrate the invention of that art which pushed backward into the dim past the old darkness of ignorance, and welcomed with warm grasp the approach of the new light of knowledge; an art, moreover, which was the very gift of God. And how grandly he discharged his task! How piety and genius shine out in blended glory in it! I do not share in the opinion of some, that the beautiful symphony which opens the piece was written before the Centennial Festival, and the vocal music alone written ex

pressly for this occasion: the whole bears to my mind the unmistakable marks of the freshest spontaneity and unbroken unity. Nor can I agree with those critics who find in the "Hymn of Praise" only an imitation of Beethoven's Symphony in D minor. So far as the inner character of the two pieces is concerned, they are almost as unlike as an Alpine landscape in the sunlight is to chaos after the creation, under the first rays of the newly streaming light; as unlike as Michael Angelo's Jehovah is to Raphael's Sistine Madonna. The only point which they have in common is, that both end in song; but in Mendelssohn's the vocal part is much the larger, and the orchestral Symphony which opens it is wholly subordinate to the choral portion which follows, and closes the piece, — both parts, instrumental and vocal, forming an unbroken whole, mutually supporting each other, neither of which can be spared without a grievous mutilation. Beethoven resorted to the human voice, as the best aid which he could command, to help him translate into the genial element of tones the most intense reaching-out of the heart after joy, — a reaching-out almost painful in its intensity. To do this, he went as far as he could go towards the realization of angel rather than human voices. But Mendelssohn uses the passion of joy in an entirely different way. He wishes to make it the expression of delight at the victory over darkness; and he accom-

plishes his end by instrumental music, rather than by the voice, and justifies the name of "Symphony Cantata," which has been given to the "Hymn of Praise." In the very first strain of the instrumental part, the clear ringing B flat utters the key-note of the piece: the strain is given out from the brazen throats of trumpets and trombones, and immediately repeated by the whole orchestra; then the movement becomes more and more skilfully involved, but with ever-increasing strength and volume. The glorious passage, "All that hath life and breath, praise ye the Lord," given *allegro maestoso e vivace*, is thrillingly kindling. An allegretto agitato then comes in as the necessary shading, (for who could bear a picture without some shade?) which paints the craving of Nature for Light in an antique style, and reproduces the very characteristics, one might say, of knighthood, and the atmosphere of the cloister.

The painful intensity of the longing for the light to break, soon softens, however, into the hush of an adagio religioso, which tells, in its sweet, subdued strains, the story of anxious expectation for divine power to reveal itself, and for the light to break through the veil of darkness which encompasses the earth. This forms the transition to the last passage of the instrumental prelude, and conducts the hearer to the kindling vocal chorus which opens what many regard as the true "Hymn

of Praise." Through the chorus, however, there subtly winds a thread of sweet sound, — a delicate soprano solo. Then follows what may be called, in the German way, a dramatic soul-picture, like that in the Forty-second Psalm. One voice admonishes the others not to refrain from exulting in the help of the Lord, — "Proclaim it, ye who are saved of the Lord;" and the chorus strikes grandly in, with the same burden to its song. Then follows a noble duet by two women's voices, — a delightfully spiritual passage, full of feeling, and touching the listener to the heart. This is responsive to the admonition of the last chorus, — "I waited for the Lord, and he heard me; and he bowed himself to me, and heard my prayer: blessed is the man who rests his confidence on God." A tenor, almost in wailing tones, paints the mournful condition of all things before divine help came: "The bands of death had compassed me; the pains of hell had laid hold upon me." The sharp, piercing question, shouted out in the shrillest tenor, "Watchman, will not the night soon be past?" is thrilling in its effect upon an audience. Then is heard, all unexpected, a strain, as a message from heaven, in a woman's voice, — liquid, pure, soft, and breathing the soothing spell of almost an angel's words, — "The night *is* past;" and, in eager tones of jubilation, the full chorus strikes in, — "The night is past, the day is come;" to which strain the pious closing words link

themselves, — "Let us, then, lay aside the works of darkness, and take to ourselves the weapons of light." This superb chorus — alternating the words, "The night is past, the day is come" (the accent laid upon *day* and *night*, and these words prolonged) — is, undeniably, the grandest thing which has been written in modern times; and is only to be compared with Mendelssohn's own chorus in "St. Paul," — "Arise, arise! the light is breaking!" or with Haydn's "Let there be light," in the "Creation." In the "Hymn of Praise," there is, however, more power and massiveness than in the latter. In this chorus, the truly Christian expression of thanksgiving closes with the choral, "Now thank God, all!" sung at first by voices alone, in full harmony; and then, the second verse, sung in unison, with a figurative orchestral accompaniment, is especially effective. The words are, "Praise God, the Father, who parts the night and darkness from the day and morning light: his praise we sing." And, in order to give the work a noble and worthy ending, there follows a beautiful duet, — "Therefore I sing thy everlasting praise, thou faithful God;" and yet once again the grand choral wave of sound lifts itself on high, filling the soul with the most exalted emotion, as the lofty fugue rolls out, — "Ye nations, ye kings, ye heavens and earth, proclaim the praise and glory of God." That the text of the "Hymn of Praise" — so appropriate, and

withal so thoroughly biblical in its origin — was collated by Mendelssohn himself, need hardly be said.

I would not impose my judgment as supreme; but, in my opinion, the "Hymn of Praise" is Mendelssohn's greatest work, in which his genius, unfettered by any model (which is not always the case in the "St. Paul"), shines out in its truest originality, and most characteristic as well as most beautiful features. I do not know which to praise most, — the strict adherence to the main thought, so fitly chosen, the profound piety and spirituality of the work, or the exquisite combination of melody and harmony in the music. All three excellences, combined, give glory to this grand effort. The first production of this piece was very brilliant: the chorus and orchestra were admirably selected and trained. Only the substitution, in the soprano solos, of a lady not resident at Leipzig, in the place of an artist of great excellence residing there, but who had been set aside for some reason unknown to me, left any thing to be wished. Despite this, however, the work called out the greatest enthusiasm, which could hardly be repressed within bounds even by the fact that the audience were seated within the walls of a church. After the first duet, a subdued whisper of applause ran through the edifice, and betrayed the suppressed delight of the listeners. On one of the evenings following, a torch-light procession was made in honor of the great

composer. Mendelssohn, who then lived in Lurgenstein's Garden, appeared at the window, his face lighted up with joy. "Gentlemen," he said in his neat, quiet way, with a sensible trembling of his voice, "you know that it is not my manner to make many words; but I heartily thank you." A loud "Hoch!" three times shouted, was our reply.

CHAPTER IX.

Efforts to erect a Monument to Bach. — Concerts given by Mendelssohn to raise Money for this Object. — "Hymn of Praise" in England. — Mendelssohn's Visit to Queen Victoria. — He returns to Leipzig. — He is specially honored by the King of Saxony. — New Musical Activity. — The Leipzig Concerts. — He plays with Clara Schumann. — Directs Bach's "Passion Music." — Careful Training of his Singers.

SCARCELY had Mendelssohn erected for himself, in the hearts of all true friends of art, a monument so noble and so enduring as this, when his unwearied genius resolved on commemorating, in a worthy manner, the advent in the world of music of that one of his predecessors to whom he felt under the greatest weight of obligation, and whom he most resembled in the severity of his studies, as well as in the loftiness of his aims. John Sebastian Bach, who had labored so usefully, and with such distinguished honor, as cantor at the Thomas School at Leipzig, and whose spirit had appeared again in the person of Mendelssohn, ought to have, his friends thought, a monument in the streets of the city in which he had labored so long and well. Mendelssohn undertook to erect such a monument out of his own means; and resolved, moreover, to make the rising generation of musicians more familiar with the works

of the immortal master of harmony. He gave a number of concerts, whose proceeds were devoted to this statue, and at which only Bach's works were produced. He himself wrote often, over his own name, in the Leipzig journals, in behalf of this object. The first was given at St. Thomas' Church, the 6th of August, at six o'clock in the evening. It was an organ-concert purely. He, and he alone, played, giving the finest and most difficult things from Bach, — the noble fugue in E-flat major; the fantasia on the choral, "Adorn thyself, fair Soul!" the prelude and fugue in A minor; the so-called "Passacaglia," in C minor, with its twenty-one variations; the "Pastorella;" and the toccata in A minor. He closed with a free fantasia on the choral, "O sacred head, now wounded!" This performance, so admirable in every respect, was the more remarkable from the fact, that Mendelssohn had not, for a long time, touched an organ.

Seeing the greatness and the exhausting variety of Mendelssohn's labors during the working season of the year, no wonder that his delicate body at length began to fail, and to deny its office. Not long after the great organ-concert, he fell dangerously sick. Scarcely had he recovered in some measure, when he began to prepare himself for his journey to England, to direct the great September Festival at Birmingham, where his "Hymn of Praise," among other things, was to be given. As,

on the 11th of that month, he had not yet arrived in London, the first rehearsal of the "Hymn of Praise" was held at the Hanover-square Rooms, without him. Mr. Knyvett was the conductor; Mr. Turle had the organ-part; and Moscheles helped the choir to keep correct time. On the 18th of September, Mendelssohn arrived in London; on the 20th, he journeyed with Moscheles to Birmingham; and, on the 23d, the performance of the "Hymn of Praise" took place, at which were present, among others, his relatives, Souchay of Manchester, his friend Klingemann, and the English musical critic Chorley. I need not speak in detail of the success of the work.

I will not say with certainty whether the invitation of Mendelssohn to the Queen's palace was during this visit, or whether it was during his next visit to England in 1842; but as he was thus highly complimented on one of these two visits, and as I shall have occasion from this time to speak of many favors shown to the great composer by royalty, I will weave the account of this visit in now. Her Majesty — who, as well as her husband, was a great friend of art, and herself a skilful musician — received the distinguished German in her own sitting-room; Prince Albert being the only one present besides herself. As he entered, she asked his pardon for the somewhat disorderly appearance of the apartment; and began to re-arrange the articles with

her own hands, in which Mendelssohn gallantly offered his assistance. Some parrots, whose cages hung in the room, she herself carried into the next apartment; in which Mendelssohn helped her also. She then requested her guest to play something; and afterwards she sang some songs of his which she had sung at a court concert soon after the attack upon her person. She was not wholly satisfied, however, with her own performance; and said pleasantly to Mendelssohn, "I can do better; ask Lablache if I cannot: but I am afraid of you." I may remark, that I do not have this anecdote from Mendelssohn's English friends, but from his own lips. He used often to speak afterwards of the graciousness of the English queen; and the whole occurrence is to her honor, as much as to that of her guest.

On the 2d of October, Mendelssohn left London, on his way to Leipzig, in company with Chorley and his friend Moscheles. The first subscription concert had to be conducted without him, and by his friend David; but, at the second, we see him at his old pos Moscheles passed fourteen very happy days in Menc lssohn's house, during which the great composer playe to him a great many new pieces not yet brought b fore the public. On the 19th of October, he gave his guest a *soirée* in the hall of the Gewandhaus, at which were performed two of the overtures to "Leonora," and the Forty-second Psalm. Moscheles played his own

G-minor Concerto; then, with Mendelssohn, his "Homage to Handel;" and, with him and Madame Schumann, a concerto for three pianos by Bach.

But the 3d of December was to be a high day for the musical public of Leipzig. The "Hymn of Praise" was to be given for the first time in the music hall of the Gewandhaus. The laurel-crowned director's desk, the storm of applause with which he was received, indicated the gratitude of the music-loving community of that city to the great composer. After the concert had been finely opened with the Jubilee Overture, an aria from "Titus" followed, sung by Sophia Schloss; then Beethoven's noble fantasia for the piano-forte with chorus. The "Hymn of Praise" formed the second part. The excellence of the soprano soloist on that occasion promoted very largely the success of the piece. Never was the "Praise the Lord, O my soul!" sung with more tenderness and depth of feeling. The alto and tenor parts were also very finely sustained: so, too, were the choruses and the orchestral accompaniments. The enthusiasm of the audience knew no bounds. It wanted but little of covering the composer and his desk with flowers, and bearing him away on the hands of his admirers to his house.

This well-merited triumph was speedily renewed in a more subdued yet equally brilliant manner. The King of Saxony, Frederick Augustus, the zealous patron

of art and science, came to Leipzig on the 15th of December, and expressed the wish to hear Mendelssohn's "Hymn of Praise." It was repeated, in his presence, on the 16th; the parts sustained by the same artists as before. It was preceded, at the king's command, and in accordance with his own choice, by the overture to "Oberon," the cavatina from "Figaro," "Giunse alfin il momento," and Beethoven's great sonata (Op. 47) for piano-forte and violin, played by Mendelssohn and David. It was interesting to see the two kings — one in the realm of song, the other in territorial possession — brought together on the common domain of feeling. The audience enjoyed not only the music, but its evident impression on the beloved prince. At the close of the concert, the king rose quickly from his seat, and hurried through the broad aisle to the orchestra, where Mendelssohn, David, and the other performers, were standing. He thanked them in few words, but in the kindliest manner. Mendelssohn accompanied the king a few steps towards his seat; and doubtless, in many a spectator's memory, the words came up, —

> "The king and the singer walk side by side:
> They stand, and survey one kingdom wide."

Of matters of interest connected with Mendelssohn, during the rest of that year, it may be remarked, that the Forty-second Psalm was given at the annual Swiss music festival at Basle, from the 6th to the 9th of

July, and also at the Palatinate Festival at Spires, in conjunction with Mendelssohn's "A Calm at Sea and a Happy Voyage," and all were received with acclamations of the heartiest applause. "St. Paul" was given under Mendelssohn's own direction at the North German Festival, held at Schwerin; on the 20th of September, a. Reichenberg in Bohemia; at the beginning of October, at Dresden; and on the 26th of October, at Mayence.

The year 1841 introduces us to undiminished activity in Mendelssohn's management of the Leipzig concerts. On the 14th of January, he played Beethoven's piano-forte concerto in G major. The critic of the "New Gazette of Music" says, with regard to this performance, "The pearl of the concert to-day was Beethoven's concerto. It was played by Mendelssohn himself. Many a production, which in this age of shallowness would be overlooked, has received its resurrection call from him; and so too this composition owes its resuscitation to our great modern composer; it is, perhaps, Beethoven's greatest concerto for the piano, in no one of its three movements inferior to the celebrated concerto in E-flat major. The cadences introduced by Mendelssohn were, as always, master-works within a master-work; the returns to the orchestral part surprisingly delicate and novel. The applause was great after the concerto."

The next four subscription concerts were historical

and the programme was selected from the works of the first masters of German art, — Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. The arrangement seemed this time to favor more than before the understanding of the progress of music; for each concert was devoted to one, or, at most, to two masters. In the matter of selecting, arranging, directing, these concerts were wholly Mendelssohn's work; he also took an active part in the performance. In the first, he played Bach's "Chromatic Fantasia," and a theme with variations from Handel, written in 1720; in the third, the "D-minor Concerto," and songs, from Mozart; in the fourth, he accompanied Madame Schröder-Devrient in the "Adelaide," and directed the "D-minor Symphony." The last was received by the public with more enthusiasm than ever. The performance was, in fact, unusually fine. Mendelssohn's keen eye had detected where new musical effects could be had. "We heard," writes the critic of the journal quoted above, "a tone in the scherzo which we had never heard in it before: the introduction of a D in a bass trombone gives new life to the passage." I must, out of regard to my less musical readers, deny myself the pleasure of recounting the entire programme of those four concerts. Only one may be taken as an example, the one chosen from Haydn. There were given the introduction, and a recitative, aria, and chorus from the "Creation;" the "Emperor" quartet; the motet, "Thou

art He to whom honor and praise belong;" the Symphony in B flat, and the "Hunt" and "Vintage" from the "Seasons." Any one in the least acquainted with Father Haydn's works will confess that a more judicious, characteristic, and at the same time generally acceptable programme could not have been made up. But not the historical concerts alone were remarkable for their interest: almost every one that followed brought us something valuable, and that, too, in its special, personal relation to Mendelssohn. At the seventh, in consequence of what proved to be the very opportune hoarseness of Sophia Schloss, we had her place supplied with Eichendorff's wonderful Huntsman's Song, "Who hath built thee up, O forest! so fair and so high?" If the text is exceedingly beautiful, Mendelssohn's genius has added new charms to it, and has given the song such a consecration as will not suffer it ever to be forgotten by any feeling heart. It has already made the tour of half the globe. Above all the rest, the fine passage, "Fare thee well, thou beautiful wood!" clings to the memory. When the springtime comes, and the forest-trees put on their fresh attire, and we think of the beautiful soul that sang of their beauty, we are hardly able to hear those strains without tears.

At the nineteenth subscription concert, we had the rare pleasure of hearing Beethoven's "To the distant loved one," sung by Herr Schmidt, leading tenor at the

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Leipzig theatre. Mendelssohn accompanied; and singer and player were so thoroughly in sympathy, that the performance of this gem of lyrical feeling was almost perfect. At the twentieth, Madame Schröder-Devrient sang a number of songs, and among them the "Zuleika" of Mendelssohn. Being encored in a storm of applause, she sang, with a touch of coquetry, yet with real justice, and with a fine fitness, the air, "In God's high counsels 'tis ordained;" presently she came to the words, —

> "But this thou soon must understand,
> How strong the grasp of each warm hand,
> When thou shalt leave thy dear loved land;"

which the audience applied at once, and with enthusiastic applause, to Mendelssohn. His call to Berlin was then the general theme of conversation. The hour of his departure was indeed near; yet he soon returned to take part in a concert given by Clara Schumann, in which he played with her a duet of his own composing, and wove one of the fairest flowers into the garland of that gifted woman. At the same concert, he directed a symphony of Robert Schumann's. He also assisted in the quartet concerts of his friend David.

After all this long list of successes, it would not seem possible for any new accession to be made to his fame. Still, his reputation was not yet at its height. The severest test of his ability as a director was to come. In the months of February and March, 1841, he

studied, with a very large choir of dilettanti, Bach's "Passion Music,"— even with the willing and available resources of the music-loving public of Leipzig, a herculean task. The spirit of Hercules did indeed live in the director, but in conjunction with a very feeble body, whose endurance during the rehearsals was often the subject of wonder. What endless patience and pains the first double chorus cost, with its strangely interspersed, but very effective questions! At the first two rehearsals, when this chorus was attempted, there was a truly comical falling-apart; and, despite the very serious nature of the piece, Mendelssohn himself could not refrain from hearty laughter. But he did not cease his efforts till every one of these questions was rightly thrown in, and till the whole chorus went exactly to his wish. As with this chorus, so with all; and, when he was sure of the notes, he went on to show the character of each passage, and how each one must be sung. The chorals he made the subject of the greatest care. They had to be sung with the utmost delicacy of expression, most of them very piano. All these rehearsals were exceedingly interesting and instructive. The chorus-singers were specially commended for their pains. When, in the last rehearsals, the solos came in, we were all in raptures at the depth and grandeur of the music. We ventured to think that this greatest masterpiece of all time would now, in some measure, be appreciated. The public per-

formance took place on Palm Sunday, the 4th of April, 1841, in St. Thomas's Church, and for the benefit of the Bach-Monument fund. Since Good Friday of 1728, when Bach himself directed his "Passion Music" in the same church, it had never been heard in Leipzig up to this time. The impression on the large congregation was certainly powerful. Although the music may not have been understood by the larger number, yet all hearts felt its sublimity, its majesty, none the less.

As a proof of the restless activity of Mendelssohn, it may be remarked, that at urgent request, on the 15th of April, he brought out "St. Paul" at Weimar. The 19th of April, he was invited to Dresden to give *éclat*, by his presence, to a dinner in honor of Cornelius, the artist. Whether he went or not, I do not know. In the same month, the first proposition was made, probably at his instigation, of erecting a musical Conservatorium in Leipzig. It found universal favor.

CHAPTER X.

Mendelssohn is made Doctor of Philosophy. — The King of Saxony offers him his Kapellmeistership. — The King of Prussia, Frederick William IV., does the same. — The Post accepted. — Composition of the Music for the "Antigone" of Sophocles. — Representation of the Tragedy in the Royal Palace. — Episode at Leipzig. — Appearance of the great Symphony in A Minor. — The "Antigone" at Leipzig. — Visit to Düsseldorf. — New Honors from the King of Prussia. — Journey to Lausanne. — His Stay at Frankfort. — Architectural Improvements at Leipzig. — Varied Activity. — Founding of the Leipzig Conservatorium of Music. — Loss of his Mother.

AS in labors, so in honors, was this year rich; for Leipzig, only too rich. That city had early bestowed its honors on its distinguished son, in giving him, through its University, as early as 1836, the title of Doctor of Philosophy; an honor which he valued highly. In June or July of 1841, the King of Saxony invited him to be his kapellmeister. But kind Frederick William IV., King of Prussia, who, from the day when he mounted the throne, aimed and attempted to draw around him all the men of noblest genius in Germany, had fixed his eye on the former resident of his capital, and invited him to become his kapellmeister, with a handsome salary. Mendelssohn could scarcely do otherwise than listen favorably to this honorable proposal; and his relation to the king was always a delightful one.

This gifted prince made it a special study to rightly employ the genius of his new kapellmeister; for example, the idea of setting the "Antigone" of Sophocles to music was wholly his. But Mendelssohn would not only devote the efforts of his genius to his royal patron; he wanted also to do some service to Prussia in the exercise of his art. He was, in point of fact, put at the disposal of the bureau of public worship (an expression which amused us much at Leipzig, when we thought how much Mendelssohn depended in his best work on the freest use of his own individuality, and how little he loved the direction of others); but the bureau did not know, at first, how to use his rich gifts in its service, and gave him no work: for a while, he found himself in idleness, no congenial condition for him; and the old Leipzig field of his activity soon came to seem more attractive than ever. Yet the wishes of Frederick William in behalf of Mendelssohn were good; and Leipzig is indebted to them for many a rare pleasure. The first work which His Majesty imposed on his kapellmeister was the composition of an overture, choruses, and the melodramatic music to the "Antigone" of Sophocles. Mendelssohn composed this music during his summer sojourn in Berlin (or perhaps rather in Potsdam), in the incredibly short space of eleven days. He very quickly and easily grasped the idea of bringing that noble work to the comprehension of the moderns,

entered into it with his accustomed ardor, and used his own training in the ancient classics (he read the "Antigone" in Greek, himself) to the best advantage. Under the direction of the poet Tieck, the piece was prepared for the Potsdam court-stage, with a complete revival of the customs of antiquity; and, with Mendelssohn's music, it was given on the 15th of October, the king's birthday, before a select circle. Thus its effect was limited, and did not reach the larger public for a long time. It was reserved for Leipzig first to introduce this new creation of her favorite to the world. Of Mendelssohn's further activity during the first half of this winter in Berlin, no word whatever has reached us. Even in the second half, his efforts were confined to giving the "St. Paul" twice; the first time in the concert-room of the theatre, and under his own direction. It seems to have been remarkably well rendered. The other performance was in the Sing-Academie, also under his direction.

Yet that same winter, as still connected with us at Leipzig, he was exceedingly active; his efforts being only interfered with by his journeys to Berlin. The direction of concerts had passed into the hands of his friend David; and we were well content, since he continued to labor in the very spirit of Mendelssohn. At the first concert was given the splendid overture "A Calm at Sea and a Happy Voyage." Yet we did enjoy

best, of course, the presence of him who wrote that overture. And he came before we expected him; in November, he directed three most admirable concerts. At the first, the overture to "Oberon" and the "A-major Symphony." At the second, David produced a new symphony of his own; and Mendelssohn played with him Beethoven's great sonata for piano-forte and violin in C minor, besides some "Songs without Words." To this were added the overture to "Leonora" in C and the Ninety-fifth Psalm, by Mendelssohn. At the third, he played Beethoven's "G-major Concerto," with his own masterly cadences, and directed the performance of the Hundred and fourteenth Psalm, and the overture, solos, and choruses from "St. Paul." So well feasted and equipped, we could easily fast a few months. *Au reste*, that was a genuine St. Paul year. At Reichenberg in Bohemia, at Freiberg in Saxony, at Naumberg, at Aix-la-Chapelle, even at Rochelle in France, the "St. Paul" was given. At the last place, the occasion was *le Congrès musical de l'Ouest:* the text was translated into French. Paris followed, in 1842.

The last-named year gave us two more noble works of Mendelssohn, brought out, too, under his own direction. The first two months, indeed, passed with only memorable recollections of his great activity in previous years: at the New-Year's concert, Madame Schumann was present, the artist who grasped most perfectly the

inner sense of Mendelssohn's productions; this was made manifest to all in her consummate rendering of his "G-minor Concerto." On the 21st of January, we had a concert made up wholly of productions of a scholar of Mendelssohn, the talented young Hollander Verhulst; and, on the 27th, Mrs. Alfred Shaw delighted us again with her charming co-operation in the concerts. She had just returned from a journey to Italy in the study of her art, where she had gained new proficiency in the use of her voice. Besides, we had, in those two months, of Mendelssohn's productions, the overtures, "A Calm at Sea and a Happy Voyage," and the "Hebrides;" also the piano quartet in B minor, and the stringed quartet in D major (Op. 44). At the end of February, he came himself; and, at the very close of this month, he directed the concert of the celebrated harpist, Parish Alvars, at which, among other things, the overture to the "Midsummer Night's Dream" was given. At that time no virtuoso could reckon on having a full audience, unless he presented in his programme some one or more of the compositions of Mendelssohn.

On the 13th of March appeared the new work, which had long been awaited with eager expectation, — Mendelssohn's "Symphony in A minor." It was the third which he wrote, but the first to challenge and command the general attention of the musical world. His first, in C minor, was a youthful work, to which he himself

did not attach much value; the second (in A major), written for the Philharmonic Society in London, was not known out of England. It was in the third that he won a name for complete mastership in this difficult branch of musical composition. It was asserted that the first strains of this symphony dated from his stay in Rome, and that a distinct southern coloring was to be found in them. I confess that I see little ground for this theory, and I do not think that any one who was not prepossessed with the idea could trace any unusual southern glow in it. In this piece Mendelssohn remained true to his character as a composer. It is a fine, thoughtful work, tinged with a slight vein of sadness, which, aiming not in the slightest at great effects, by the use of the simplest means finds its way to the heart. Among the four movements, which have the most intimate connection and interdependence possible, it is the charming and graceful scherzo and the soulful adagio which have found the greatest favor with the public. Yet the symphony, as a whole, met with the greatest favor, and was at once repeated, at the general request, and was even more intelligible, and therefore more acceptable, when given the second time than it was at first.

All the more grateful were we for this gift, that it came to us in the midst of the preparations for a second, if possible, of still more value. On the 5th of March,

the "Antigone" of Sophocles, translated by Donner and set to music by Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, was brought out at the Leipzig theatre, before a full audience. The composer directed, and was received with great applause. The music, indeed, was not antique, if to be so it must be played on the σύριγξ, the σάλπιγξ, and the φόρμιγξ, or if the composer must confine himself to that Greek type of melody and harmony of which all we know is, that it was extremely simple, and, according to our ideas, meagre; but it was antique completely, in its being filled with the fire of the tragedy, and making its spirit intelligible to us moderns, strengthening the meaning of the words, and giving a running musical commentary on them. This the philologists have confessed, — at least the German ones; for at their convention at Cassel, in the autumn of the following year, they passed a vote of thanks to Mendelssohn for giving, by his music to the "Antigone" of Sophocles, a new life and interest to Greek tragedy. With us at Leipzig, as indeed everywhere, the Eros Chorus with its solemn awe in the presence of the divine omnipotence of Love, and the Bacchus Chorus, which, swinging the thyrsus, celebrates the praise of the Theban maiden's son in joyous strains, as well as the melo-dramatic passages, where Antigone enters, wailing, the chamber where her dead lover lay, and whither Creon has borne in his son's corpse, had an

imposing effect. The impression of the whole piece, taken by itself, was very powerful. With amazement our modern world realized the sublimity of the ancient tragic Muse, and recognized the "great, gigantic Fate, which exalts man while grinding him to powder." In breathless silence the audience listened to the melodious flow of the mighty words, and followed with intense interest the development of the plot, unbroken by any untimely subordinate one, breaking up all sequence in the scenes. The stage itself—thanks to the experienced Nestor of philologists, who unites insight with taste—was conformed in the minutest details to the descriptions of the ancient stage. The choruses were sung, not merely passably well, but with eminent propriety and strict adherence to the subject; and the parts of Creon and Antigone left little to be wished in the manner of their representation. Certainly no one went away without great satisfaction; and probably nearly all had appreciated, as never before, the purity and sublimity of the ancient drama. People of very inferior cultivation I myself heard praise the "noble language," which may be a good enough offset to the jealous criticism of some hostile pen, which called the poetry the "rattle of leaden rhymes." At any rate, the play was given, on the 5th, 6th, and 8th of March, to houses always crowded, and amid applause always hearty. At the close of the first representation, the musical composer and the lead

ing actors were called out. About a year later, the tragedy was again brought forward before an immense audience. That it is not played now is owing, I suppose, to the difficulty of finding actors in the leading parts.

In Berlin, too, the "Antigone" was played in public. But the occasion passed more quietly there, if we may trust the public journals, than at Leipzig. Perhaps among the Berliners, the tragedy seemed too great for criticism, and too solemn for applause. A few days later, on the 25th of April, Mendelssohn brought out, for the benefit of the poor in Berlin, his "Hymn of Praise" (whether in the Sing-Academie or in a church, I do not know). It is to be hoped that it found greater favor with the lovers of true music than it did with one class* of Berlin critics.

* I will not deny myself the satisfaction of quoting one sample of the style of criticism to which I refer, in order to justify the insinuation contained in the text. The Berlin correspondent of an eminent musical journal undertook to defend the composer from the charge of not always adapting the same words, when repeated, to the same musical expression. Then he continues: "The weakness of Mendelssohn lies in another direction. In the eye of the world, he occupies the pious, weakly, soft-hearted Christian stand-point, which demands that all sorrow be accepted humbly, as a dispensation and a trial from God's own hand, and which would prompt to break into songs of praise to Him for all deliverance, and for all light granted in darkness. From this idea, that God does all things for us, and that thanks are due to him for all things, Mendelssohn never frees himself: it runs through his 'St. Paul,' and all his church

With the approach of the joyous Whitsuntide season, Mendelssohn visited Düsseldorf, the home of his first fame, in order to direct the musical festival in company with his friend Julius Rietz. The occasion was favored by the most delightful spring weather; the preparations were most thoroughly made, and in the hope of a brilliant effect. More than five hundred singers and players, among them the leading soloists of Germany, were present, to give excellence and attraction to the occasion. On Whitsunday the festival was opened with Beethoven's "C-minor Symphony," followed by Handel's "Israel in Egypt." As the organ would have been in the way in the unavoidably contracted hall, Mendelssohn arranged that part for wind-instruments, and adapted the accompaniment of the recitative to two violoncellos and a double bass. On the second day, Mendelssohn's "Hymn of Praise" was given, and welcomed as a brilliant and genuine musical work. After this came the March from Beethoven's "Ruins of Athens;" Haydn's motet, "Insanæ et vanæ curæ;" and Weber's festival cantata. On the third day, which was devoted to chamber music, the violinist Ernst was to have taken part; but he was detained in Weimar by sickness, and

music." Poor Mendelssohn, who could never free himself from this idea! But perhaps richer than his critic after all! Every true Christian soul will acknowledge, that hostile criticism from such a quarter is the highest possible praise.

Mendelssohn, without any preparation, played Beethoven's "E-flat Concerto." The accomplished musical reporter of the "Leipzig New Musical Gazette" says, very justly, about this performance: "His appearance at the piano, and his remarkable performance, after so many other accomplished artists, reminded us of the Egyptians with whom Moses had to contend. In technical skill, rapid execution, and facile fingering, there was no fresh palm to be won. This was not what Mendelssohn sought: he aimed to reproduce the very poem which lay in Beethoven's mind when he wrote, and in this he perfectly succeeded. Every one was amazed: music in his hands was so different from music in other hands, the piano to his touch so different from the piano to another touch, that many in the audience would have given the palm to the *genius* which swayed them, over the highest mechanical skill." This passage shows, with rare power of discrimination, Mendelssohn's gifts as a virtuoso compared with those of other virtuosos. He possessed their skill; but they did not possess his genius. To him skill was only means to an end, while to almost all virtuosos it is an end of itself, — the highest end.

After the concerto of Beethoven, Mendelssohn delighted the audience with some of his "Songs without Words," and closed with a free fantasia, in which he ran through all that was finest in the music of the past two

days. And, regarding the manner in which Mendelssohn directed the great and disjointed forces which were placed at his disposal at this festival, the writer above quoted very justly says: "Amid the whole mass the leader towered up like one born to harmonize these divided forces, to unify them, and give them a single soul. By his captivating politeness, his cutting wit, and his thorough knowledge of music, he roused the dullest and most unambitious to zeal, and the most flagging to persistency."

Not only did Mendelssohn receive on this occasion the heartiest thanks of singers and auditors, but about this time there came a new token of royal favor. In June, the journals announced that the King of Prussia had conferred upon him the order of merit, first given by Frederick the Great, as a badge of highest honor. Towards the last of May or the first of June, Mendelssohn, this time in company with his wife, went to England, where his old friends, and newer ones, awaited new triumphs from him. On the 3d of June, he arrived in London. Musical entertainments in the circle of his acquaintances, and in the house of Moscheles, and with his co-operation, were intermingled with public performances. On the 13th of June, Mendelssohn directed the first production in England of his "A-minor Symphony;" on the 24th, he played with Moscheles, for the benefit of the sufferers in the great

fire at Hamburg, the latter's "Homage to Handel," and accompanied Miss Adelaide Kemble, afterwards Countess Sartorius, and then the first singer in England, in his own "On the wings of song," and his well-known "Spring Song;" afterwards he accompanied Miss Hawes in the alto solo from "St. Paul." On the 28th of June, Miss Kemble gave him a *soirée*. On the day before, he directed the performance, at a Philharmonic Concert, of his overture, "Fingal's Cave." On the 6th of June, he played at a *soirée* at Moscheles' house, and, in conjunction with him, his duet in A major for four hands; and after playing the music to "Antigone" before Moscheles alone, it was given at a *soirée* beneath the same hospitable roof, Mendelssohn accompanying on the piano. The overture to Victor Hugo's "Ruy Blas," and variations on an original theme in E-flat major, formed the last of these entertainments; and, on the 12th of July, Mendelssohn took his departure.

He seems to have journeyed direct to Lausanne, whither he had been invited, to direct his "Hymn of Praise." He arrived, however, one day too late, not even in time to hear Rossini's "Stabat Mater," which was given on the first day, directly after Mendelssohn's great work, — a very peculiar juxtaposition of pieces certainly, which would not have specially edified Mendelssohn, had he been present. He was greeted, however, with the most cordial welcome; and a critique

appeared at the same time on the style of both Mendelssohn's and Rossini's sacred music, which could not fail to be grateful to the author of the "Hymn of Praise." "Mendelssohn," it said, "the profound student of Handel and Bach, fills the soul with devotion, while Rossini merely entertains, and, at the highest, awakens a sentimentality which one might almost call sensuous."

The "Hymn of Praise" was given the same year, on the 8th of July, at the musical festival at the Hague; on the 22d of August, at Reichenberg, in Bohemia; and, on the 18th of October, at the city of Glauchau, in the Schönburg country, at the third centennial celebration of the rise of the Reformation. At Erfurt, the Forty-second Psalm was given on the 13th of June; and at Görlitz, late in the autumn, "St. Paul."

Returning from Switzerland, Mendelssohn seems to have tarried for a time at Frankfort, where he was always so well pleased to stop and rest. At any rate, it is recorded that he played there, in September, at one of the *matinées* given by his friend Hiller. In the same month, he was expected back at Leipzig. He spent first, however, a few days at Berlin. In Leipzig, meanwhile, a change had taken place, not without importance to the music-loving community. The Concert Hall, which had for some time been inadequate to meet the wants of the public, was enlarged; the walls newly

painted; and the dim oil-lamps, genial and home-like indeed, but out of date, gave way to the modern splendors of gas. The only thing to be regretted was, that the ceiling, decorated with valuable and interesting, but (it must be confessed) rather smoky pictures, had to be destroyed too. Many feared that, with these alterations, the old *genus loci* would disappear, — a fear which does not seem as yet to be justified. The old motto of the place was allowed to stand, — "Res severa est verum gaudium." The remarkable acoustic properties of the hall, too, suffered little by the change. And, when the day came for the dedication of the newly decorated hall, there was the sure pledge given, that there was no thought of yielding any thing of that lofty striving after the highest in art, which had always characterized the place. Mendelssohn, coming for this express purpose from Berlin, directed the first concert. The shouts of welcome which he received rose even above the joyous notes of the Jubilee Overture, which opened the evening's feast. Madame Schumann, Sophia Schloss, and David, all gave solo performances, to do honor to the distinguished guest. Beethoven's "A-major Symphony" closed the whole, given by the orchestra, inspired by Mendelssohn's presence, with special enthusiasm and unfailing accuracy.

After this first concert, he went back to Berlin, and seems to have directed some symphony *soirées;* and I

notice, that, at the beginning of the next winter, it is announced by the Berlin press, that "Mendelssohn will direct some symphony *soirées* this winter *also*," which presupposes some already given under his direction. Yet it must excite wonder to see an event so notable as Mendelssohn's entrance into the Berlin musical world passed over with the mere remark, that the symphony *soirées* "were still numerously attended." It would be a really valuable service, if the friends of Mendelssohn in Berlin would give the world an account of his activity in that city, and show the nature and cause of the obstacles which impeded him there more than elsewhere.

From the 12th of November, Mendelssohn directed the Leipzig concerts to the close of the winter season (1842–3). They only gained in prestige under his management. He took a great interest, too, in extra concerts, which were given in behalf of charitable objects; as, for example, in one on the 21st of November, for the benefit of the orchestral fund, where his overture to the "Midsummer Night's Dream" was given, and he, together with Clara Schumann, played a great four handed sonata of Moscheles; and, on the 26th of November, in a concert given by the celebrated Sophie Schröder, in which Madame Schröder-Devrient and Tichatschek sang, Mendelssohn played his "D-minor Concerto," and brought forward his overture to "Ruy

Blas." On the 8th of December, he played the "G-major Concerto" by Beethoven, and, according to the accounts in the musical journals, with a perfection of execution and a thorough grasp of the piece such as we had never enjoyed before. To this he added some "Songs without Words," the last of which, in A major, was new and indescribably charming. The last concert of the year was honored with the presence of the King of Saxony. It was opened with Rochlitz's double chorus, "Hold music in lasting honor," in memory of that distinguished and amiable musician. David played his variations on a Russian People's Song. Beethoven's "Heroic Symphony," the overture to the "Midsummer Night's Dream," and the Forty-second Psalm, by Mendelssohn, were given. The king, who selected the larger number of pieces for the concert (the symphony from Beethoven, and the pieces from Mendelssohn), expressed his entire gratification. But Mendelssohn felt under a still greater burden of gratitude to the king. The latter had for some time carried in his mind a favorite idea of the composer's,—one which would be greatly for the advantage of Leipzig and the whole musical world. As early as November, Mendelssohn had written to Moscheles, "Now or never must a Conservatorium come into being in Leipzig." In order to procure the necessary funds, Mendelssohn applied directly to the king, who had the control of a large sum of money, left at the decease of a

wealthy Leipzig citizen, Blümner by name. The king granted this money as a Conservatorium fund, and established six free musical scholarships for natives of Saxony. And so Mendelssohn could hope and expect to see this cherished idea of his, which was ardently seconded on all sides, put itself forth in act. The two kings whose favor he especially enjoyed, vied with each other in showing him honor. In the same month, or nearly the same month, when the King of Saxony made this admirable disposal of the money put into his hands, the King of Prussia conferred upon Mendelssohn the title of General Director of Church Music in Prussia, and especial director of the music at the Berlin cathedral. Yet Mendelssohn would unquestionably have preferred to tarry in Leipzig, if a great grief then coming upon him had not carried him to the city of his parents' home. Towards the end of December of this year (1842), he lost the faithful, the accomplished and wise guide of his childhood and his youth, — his devoted mother. He bore this loss, which struck to his very heart, with manly composure. Soon after, he turned back to his old round of labors in Leipzig, where so much awaited the finishing touch of his hand; knowing well that the best healing for such wounds is found in the most strenuous activity.

In the year 1843, a concert of great interest was given in the neighborhood of Leipzig. It took place

early in January, under the direction of Franz, and for the benefit of the Handel* music school. Its programme was thus made up: Mendelssohn's overture, the "Hebrides," a four-part song by Schubert, Mozart's "D-minor Concerto," and Mendelssohn's "Hymn of Praise." The last is said to have made a most profound and lasting impression. The tenor solo, "Watchman, will the night soon pass?" seemed to a musical critic present one of the most thrilling, and the chorus, "The night is past," one of the most effective passages in all modern oratorio music.

* Handel was born in Halle; and his statue in bronze adorns the market-place of the city.

CHAPTER XI.

Opening of the Leipzig Conservatorium. — Productive Activity. — "First Walpurgis Night." — Leipzig Concerts. — Active Interest in the Conservatorium. — "Midsummer Night's Dream" at Leipzig.

ON the 16th of January, in the same year, appeared the general programme of the new school for music at Leipzig, announcing that instruction would be given in composition; in violin, piano-forte, and organ playing, and in singing; with scientific lectures on the history of music, æsthetics, and exercises in combination playing and chorus singing. The chief professors were Mendelssohn, Hauptmann, Robert Schumann, David, Pohlenz, and Becker. Those who wished to enter the school were requested to give in their names before the 23d of March. The number of applications up to this time was forty-six; by July there were sixty-eight; forty-two candidates were accepted, — among them two Dutchmen, one Englishman, and one American. On the 3d of April, the Conservatorium was solemnly opened by Minister Falkenstein, in the name of his majesty the King of Saxony. In the middle of this month, the full programme of instruction was given.

Mendelssohn was to instruct in solo singing, in instrumental music and composition; Hauptmann, in harmony and counterpoint; Schumann, in piano-forte playing and in musical composition. David taught the violin, and Becker the organ. In the place of Pohlenz, the accomplished teacher of singing, who died suddenly, Madame Grabau-Bünau and Herr Böhme undertook the direction of that department. Other accomplished subordinate teachers were added; instruction was given in Italian, and lectures were delivered on the history of music. Many munificent gifts were made to the institution, to establish it on the foundation where it ought to be: one gentleman gave five hundred rix-dollars; another, a valuable piano; another, the free use of his circulating library, for the use of the students of the Conservatorium. We are especially interested now, however, to see the active interest which Mendelssohn took in this object of his pride. He was not only its founder, but its lasting benefactor. He not only entered into the matter with the greatest ardor, but showed a much greater degree of talent in instruction than his friends had expected to see in a man of his genius. How rich in suggestion the merest hint in reviewing musical compositions, how valuable the hours spent in the more difficult departments of piano-forte playing and solo singing, all his scholars know, and thankfully confess. The private examinations of special classes, as well as the

semi-annual public examinations, he conducted, whenever he was in Leipzig, with the greatest care. Even in the lower classes, he made every pupil show with what facility he could modulate from one key to another: his keen eye, his fine ear, were everywhere; the timid ones, who wanted to be sheltered by the great crowd, he would draw out; and at times, when the conduct of a pupil did not please him, he knew how to be severe. On one occasion, soon after the founding of the Conservatorium, he sat up the half of a night, in order to mark just high enough the performances of each scholar at the examination. Of course, his large and varied interests did not permit him to continue this close supervision of details; but, so long as he remained in Leipzig, he gave himself uninterruptedly to the work of instruction, and with his whole heart. He always conducted the general examinations when it was possible for him to be in the city; and he was always ready to assist the institution by deed and word, and to distribute praise and blame whenever and wherever they were needed. Yet, with beautiful modesty, he waived the distinction of being the leader in all things: he always spoke of himself as one of the six instructors. As it was a darling wish of Mendelssohn to live and labor by the side of Moscheles, he pressed upon the latter the plan of leaving England, transferring his school to the Conservatorium at Leipzig, and joining the corps of teachers already gath-

ered there. Through Mendelssohn's efforts, the directors came to satisfactory terms with Moscheles, who did indeed transfer the scene of his labors to Leipzig, where he reaped new honors, and added new strength to the youthful institution.

We turn now from this glance at the career of Mendelssohn as a teacher, to his productive activity, and his career as an artist. At the fifteenth subscription concert, one of the earlier symphonies was given without producing a remarkable effect. To compensate, however, the pleasure was granted us of hearing a new masterpiece of Mendelssohn's, which had been composed in its primitive shape much earlier, but which had only now grown into the wholeness of a perfect work. It was "The first Walpurgis Night," a ballad by Goethe, and set to music by Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, which was given to the public, for the first time, in Leipzig, the 2d of February, 1843. The entire concert at which this piece was performed was a brilliant one in every respect. The first part consisted of a symphony by Haydn; aria from Mozart, "Deh per questo istanto solo;" Beethoven's fantasia for the piano-forte, chorus and orchestra, — the piano-forte part sustained by Madame Schumann, who afterwards played some variations from Henselt; overture to "Euryanthe," and chorus from the "Lyre and Sword," of Weber: the "Walpurgis Night" filled the whole second part. Mendelssohn had

put himself in good company, I will not deny; but a noble modesty lay in this; it was claiming the appreciation of his audience for all those master-works before this new production of his own.

Mendelssohn had begun the composition of "The first Walpurgis Night" at Rome, and probably at the express wish of Goethe, who may have conversed with him upon the subject during his stay at Weimar, when he made his protracted visit with the great poet. On the 9th of September, 1831, the time when the music to the ballad was almost finished in its first form, Goethe wrote to Mendelssohn: "This poem is wholly symbolical in its plan and purpose. For it must always be repeating itself in the world's history, that a thing old, well established, tried, and satisfying, comes to be hard pressed, jostled, shoved aside, and, if not utterly destroyed, yet cooped up in the narrowest quarters. The middle epoch, where elements declare themselves in opposition to the tendency to push what is old aside, is portrayed vividly enough in my poem; and a joyful and confident enthusiasm lights the whole up into splendor and clearness." Yet, with all the excellences of the ballad, the reader can hardly believe that the author compassed the whole of his intention to make it purely symbolical. He has not rested there, but has given to it a massive historical base, so to speak, in which the "New," which is also Goethe's "Better" (and that

means Christianity), certainly plays a sad part in the caricature of superstition. The symbolic conception grew into a living and realized drama, whose subject could not kindle the composer, with his deep religious nature, into his highest fervor. Only the close of the poem, with its beautiful and earnest thirst for truth, its confession of imperfect attainment, its longing after light, could in any measure awaken his genius into life. I do not know whether I have rightly conjectured Mendelssohn's views of the poem; but the composition seems to chime with Goethe's meaning. The tone-coloring in the overture, which paints the transition from winter to spring, with the humors of April in rain, sunshine, storm, and hail, is very graphic; and in the tenor solo which follows, and the chorus of women's voices, the beautiful blue sky and the warm air of May greet us. The dramatic element is most vividly presented in the fine chorus of watchmen, and of the people in advance, "Disperse yourselves, brave men, through all the forest glades," which makes the whole scene, short as it is, live before the eye. In the chorus, "Kommt mit Zacken und mit Gabeln," which has a touch of the grotesque the composer has, in the youthful flow of his blood, given way to the freest play of his fancy, yet with a wonderfully sustained mastery of the needed musical form, keeping order and harmony even in the wild chaos of tones. After the first presentation of the

piece in Leipzig, Mendelssohn made a number of alterations in it, giving the chorus more attractiveness than ever. Above the almost infernal mass of strange and savage sounds, there rises, peaceful, and breathing the very soul of harmony, the song of the Druid: —

> "As flames, in brightening, lose their smoke,
> So, brightening, may our Faith grow clear:
> Man robs us of our hallowed creeds;
> None, of thy light, All-father dear."

Yet, if I mistake not, one would err in trying to find in this strain the expression of complete religious rest and the "peace that passeth understanding:" it rather expresses — at least so far as the words go — the prophetic expectation of fairer and brighter days than those which are past. The composer has, however, satisfied every expectation which the poem could justify. And, if the soul is not so deeply moved by the music as one might think it would be, the reason lies rather in the nature and contents of the poem than in the quality of the music. The manner in which the piece was given the first time was beyond criticism.

I pass over the connection of Mendelssohn with the concerts which followed, as there was no special novelty introduced. It may be mentioned, however, that, on the 9th of March, on the first centennial celebration of the founding of the subscription concerts in Leipzig, Mendelssohn was represented by the One Hundred and

Fourteenth Psalm, for eight voices. Yet more influential in its bearings on the musical life of Leipzig was the concert which Mendelssohn gave at the uncovering of the Bach monument. In honor of that great master, his admirer and interpreter made a full and judicious selection from his best compositions. The programme was: Suite for the whole orchestra, consisting of overture, arioso, gavot, trio, and finale (Bourrée and Gigue); and the double choir motet *à capella*, — "I will not leave thee, except thou bless me." Then followed a concerto for the piano-forte, with orchestral accompaniment, played by Mendelssohn; the aria, with oboe obligato, from the "Passion Music," "I will awake with my Saviour," sung by Herr Schmidt; and a fantasia on a theme of Bach's, executed by Mendelssohn. The second part of the concert consisted of the cantata for the Leipzig Election in 1723; a prelude for the violin, played by David; and the Sanctus from the B-minor Mass for chorus and orchestra. Mendelssohn, though not well, went through all, according to the letter of the programme. Directly after the concert, the monument was unveiled. A choral by Bach opened the ceremony. A brief but appropriate address was given; and the services (rendered more interesting by the presence of a grandson of Bach, himself kapellmeister in Berlin, and eighty-three years old) closed with Bach's motet, "Sing to the Lord a new song," given by the scholars of the

Thomas school. The monument, the joint production of Bendemann, Hübner, and Knaur, is not indeed a masterpiece of artistic skill; but it completely fulfils its end, of keeping fresh the memory of one of the greatest of musicians, who lived and labored in this city for so long a term of years, and commemorates the affectionate regard of those who admire his genius, and look up to him as a master.

After directing the performance of "St. Paul" in Dresden, Mendelssohn seems to have taken some rest; or, to phrase the matter more truly, he seems to have turned his activity in another channel, for he could not lie idle: labor was the law of his life. We find him leading in no great festivals, either in England or on the Rhine. The probability is, that he devoted his spare time to the complete establishment of the Conservatorium, and to the composing, at the request of the King of Prussia, the rest of the music of the "Midsummer Night's Dream." Only once do we see him appear in public, — the 19th of August, playing with Clara Schumann an andante for two pianos, composed by Robert Schumann. The same month "Antigone," with Mendelssohn's music, was given at Mannheim. On the 12th of October, Shakspeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream," with the music written that summer, was brought out at the new palace in Potsdam. Tieck had given the benefit of his judicious taste in making the arrangements. On the

19th of October, Mendelssohn directed the music of "Antigone" at the same place; and on the 15th of October, the king's birthday, he directed the music at the cathedral service. The "Midsummer Night's Dream," with its charming musical commentary, pleased exceedingly: it was soon after given in public, and was demanded repeatedly.

The transfer of Mendelssohn to Berlin was to the great loss of that enthusiasm which characterized him at Leipzig. His duties were limited to the direction of the cathedral music, six great concerts in the Sing-Academie, and the symphony *soirées* of the royal orchestra. Ferdinand Hiller was appointed director of the Gewandhaus concerts at Leipzig, that winter. But, before Mendelssohn bade farewell to Leipzig, he participated in a number of what might be called preliminary farewells. At the first subscription concert, he played his charming "G-minor Concerto," together with some "Songs without Words," and a free fantasia on themes from "Euryanthe," and on the great aria of Rezia. In the concert on the 13th of October, he played, with Hiller and Clara Schumann, Bach's triple concerto. But the real farewell concert, in which all the distinguished musical talent in Leipzig took part, was given on the 18th of November. After Mendelssohn had played with Wittmann a new sonata by himself, in D major (Op. 58), for the piano-forte and the violoncello; then a trio,

in D major, from Beethoven, for the piano-forte, violin, and violoncello, with David and Wittmann, and with the liveliest applause, the following gentlemen came forward to perform Mendelssohn's octet, — David, Klengel, Hauptmann, Bach, Mendelssohn, Gade, Grenser, and Wittmann. As this eminent musical phalanx came forward, it was greeted with the loudest applause, which was repeated at the end of every movement in the octet. Shortly after, Mendelssohn went to Berlin; and for months we did not see him again. Hiller discharged the doubly arduous duties of director, as successor of Mendelssohn, with great success. It may be mentioned, not as having a very close connection with the subject of this sketch, but as an epoch in the musical life of Leipzig, that, on the 4th of December in this year, one of the most delightful productions of our time, Robert Schumann's "Paradise and the Peri," was produced. At the close of the year, since we could not have Mendelssohn in person, we were glad to have him represented to our hearing in the music of the "Midsummer Night's Dream," brought upon the Leipzig stage for the first time. I cannot praise the decorations, nor the quality of the orchestra; for Leipzig could not furnish the appliances which Berlin could offer; and the music was presented on too massive a scale, and with too little delicacy. Still, the impression which it produced was only a new tribute to its favor. We were com-

pelled to see in it a new proof of the composer's depth of nature, and were led by his magic power to enjoy his creation of a world of pure fancy, inhabited by bright and light-hearted spirits, who confront with their sunny nothingnesses the yet greater triviality of what is called practical life, and, with the aids of poesy and love, win the day. The music was no new creation: it was merely the unfolding and completing of what had already been given, in more condensed form, in the overture there long a favorite. The charming fairy antics on the leaves, the fascination of moonlight, the awkward merriment of the rustics, the longing and pain of disappointed love, the chivalry of the old heroic days, and the festive pomp of a princely wedding, — all this was so skilfully portrayed in the brilliant coloring of the overture, that it only needed further enlargement, and adaptation to the various changes of scene in the play; and this is what the composer had done, with infinite tact and the justest appreciation. The parts entirely new were the charming chorus of the fairies singing Titania to sleep; the beautiful "Night Song" without words, of true Italian glow, which accompanied Titania's rest in the grotto; and the wonderfully brilliant and stirring "Wedding March," with its fascinating trio.

It would be too much to say, perhaps, that the play has gained by Mendelssohn's music; for a creation of Shakspeare's needs no bettering: but it is certain that

the comprehension of the piece has been aided; the music which translated these fantastic dreams of a summer's night into sound has screened their lovely twilight from the glaring sunshine of our over-real age, and opened the richness of the work to those blunted natures which are themselves unable to discern the difference between poetry and prose.

CHAPTER XII.

Life at Berlin. — Unacceptable Changes. — Mendelssohn's Extraordinary Activity. — Participates in London Concerts. — Directs the Palatinate Musical Festival. — The King of Prussia releases him from his Engagement. — "Œdipus in Colonos." — Robert Schumann's "B-flat Symphony." — Jenny Lind in Leipzig.

IN Berlin, meantime, Mendelssohn had resumed his executive duties, in taking the direction of the Symphony *Soirées*, and had won hearty praise. A novelty which was introduced at these *soirées*, I know not whether at Mendelssohn's suggestion, raised the hostile criticism of those who are blindly attached to the old order of things, because it is the old. The wish had been expressed that these concerts should not be devoted exclusively to overtures and symphonies, but should include instrumental and vocal solos, taking the custom at the Leipzig Gewandhaus for a guide. At the first *soirée* of the second course, given the 28th of February, 1844, Miss Birch, whose engagement at Leipzig was closed, sang an aria; and concert-master Ganz played a solo on the violoncello. But so much opposition was raised against this change, that the management was obliged to revert to the old order. We also know that

on the 12th of March, Palm Sunday, at the request of the king, he directed the performance of "Israel in Egypt." In other Prussian cities he found great acceptance. In Dantzig, the "Midsummer Night's Dream" was given seven times in succession, and the "Antigone" twice. In Breslau, "St. Paul" was given at Easter. On the 12th of April, "Antigone" was produced a second time in Leipzig; and not long after, it was played at its own birthplace, Athens, with Mendelssohn's music, though in the Ancient Greek tongue. It was also produced at Paris in May of the same year; and the announcement was made in the journals, that Mendelssohn would personally direct. Yet it is not probable that he was there; for on the 8th of May we find him in London, whither he went to take direction of the Philharmonic Concerts. The "Antigone" was played in London, also, about the beginning of the next year (1845), at the Covent-Garden Theatre.

Mendelssohn led an extraordinarily active life this summer. After giving Leipzig the pleasure of a brief visit from him in February, where he listened to his "A-minor Symphony," he turned back, and with great willingness took a part at the concert of the eminent violoncellist Servais, playing, with him and David, Beethoven's trio in B flat. He then went to London, where he arrived, as stated above, on the 8th of May, and where he worked with great zeal. On the

very day of his arrival, he tried over with Moscheles some four-hand variations in B-flat major. On the 13th of May, he directed his own symphony in A minor; on the 14th, he played to Moscheles his music to the "Walpurgis Night;" on the 19th, he assisted in rendering Beethoven's four-hand Polonaise. On the 24th, at a meeting of the Handel Society, a splendid copy of the London edition of the "Israel in Egypt" was given to him On the 27th, he directed the music of the "Midsummer Night's Dream," and very soon again, before the royal family; not long after, he gave Beethoven's "G-major Concerto," and, last of all, directed his "St. Paul" at Exeter Hall. Amid all these great works, he attended at a large number of concerts and *soirées,* and always took a part. With Moscheles and Thalberg, he played Bach's triple concerto; at another time, he played with Moscheles the "Homage to Handel" of the latter; at still another, he accompanied Miss Dolby in Schubert's "Erlkönig;" and, lastly, he took a part in the monster concert given by Mr. Benedict, which shows the wonderful musical capacity of the English. Not less than thirty-eight pieces were given. The most striking artists besides Mendelssohn were Mesdames Grisi and Shaw; the tenors Mario and Salvi; the bassos Lablache and Staudigl; the pianists Madame Dulken and Thalberg; the violinists Sivori and Joachim; and the harpist Parish Alvars. A "Trio, Nocturne et Valse

Brillante," played by Mendelssohn, Benedict, and Madame Dulken, pleased most of all. On the 8th of July, at the eighth Philharmonic Concert, the "First Walpurgis Night" was given; and, on the 9th, Mendelssohn played at a farewell *soirée*, at the house of his friend Klingemann, the "Variations Serieuses" (Op. 54); and with Moscheles, those variations on "Preciosa," composed by both; he also accompanied the Countess Sartorius (Adelaide Kemble) in some of his own songs. The correspondent of the "Leipzig New Musical Times" thus writes of Mendelssohn's stay in London: "Mendelssohn's appearance at the fourth Philharmonic Concert, as at the rehearsal, occasioned a regular storm of applause, such as Englishmen alone know how to greet him with. And who could refrain from joining in the homage paid to so kindly a nature as well as to so great a man? His conducting brought about a great change for the better. It produced the most powerful impression on the orchestra; he led them to a stage of perfection which had never been known before, and which it was indeed difficult to gain." Another correspondent writes to another German musical journal: "Mendelssohn is already gained for all the Philharmonic Concerts next year. It is true, some old notables are opposed to the arrangement, for it disturbed them in their ancient spider-webs. But, since Mendelssohn's magic wand animated the orchestra to new life, his

music is all the rage; and the old notables are wholly forgotten."

Mendelssohn left London on the 10th of July, but only to devote himself to new activities. He had promised to direct the Palatinate Musical Festival the last of that month. His "St. Paul," Beethoven's "B-flat Symphony," the "Walpurgis Night," and Marschner's "Bundeslied" were given. His talent for directing, as well as the form and spirit of his own compositions, awakened here, as everywhere, the greatest enthusiasm. In September, he played with Moscheles the "Homage to Handel" of the latter. At the Soden Springs, where his wife and children were spending the summer, he played to Moscheles (i. e. on the piano) a new violin-concertò in E minor. The next winter, he resided at Frankfort. Yet he had first to visit Berlin to obtain permission to do so. He just touched Leipzig, as it were, on the way. The direction of the Gewandhaus concerts in Leipzig was given to the talented Niels W. Gade, a young Danish composer, whose name had been some time well known there. At Berlin, Mendelssohn directed a few symphony *soirées*. At the first of these were given Beethoven's B-flat and Haydn's E-flat major symphonies, also the overtures to the "Water Carrier" and the "Magic Flute." That same day, Mendelssohn's "Hymn of Praise" was given at Leipzig. At the next concert, and the

last which Mendelssohn directed, he produced Spohr's Symphony, No. 2, in D major, the "C-minor Symphony" by Beethoven, and the overtures to "Coriolanus" and "Euryanthe." Of Mendelssohn's fine direction of these *soirées*, noble recognition was given. The Berlin correspondent of the "Leipzig Times" writes: "He handles the orchestra as if it were a single instrument. And this one giant-instrument he plays with a precision and a fire which leaves nothing to be desired. From the strongest tones to the most tender breathing of melody, every thing comes forth clear, deep, and full of soul." In the middle of November, he received from the king his leave of absence. It was couched in the most flattering terms; and the king refused to discontinue his salary, though adding the condition, that, at the royal wish, he should visit Berlin, and bring out whatever the king might command. The closing act of Mendelssohn in Berlin that winter was the bringing-out of "St. Paul," which he did, at the king's wish, the 28th of November, at the Sing-Academie. Then he went to Frankfort, to rest in his fashion; i.e., in giving up directing, and betaking himself to composing. Whoever had followed him through the incessant and weary round of his duties could but heartily congratulate him on gaining at last a brief respite, which he so much needed. Yet, of his activity in composition that year, it remains to be mentioned, that, early in the year, when I can not precisely determine, but

doubtless in the spring, at the request of the King of Prussia, he composed music for Racine's "Athalie." In September of the same year, appeared the fifth collection of his "Songs without Words;" and large numbers of four-part and solo songs are also the gift of this fruitful year. The "St. Paul" was given at Prague; the "Walpurgis Night," at Vienna and at Munich; the Forty-second Psalm and passages from "St. Paul," at Göttingen.

Of Mendelssohn's labors at Frankfort, up to the spring of 1845, nothing more is known to me, than that, on the 15th of January, he brought out his "Walpurgis Night." Nothing more is indicated by the public journals. Yet he was hard at work that whole winter long. The conception and first labors on "Elijah," which had in fragmentary form occupied his thoughts for years; the selection and arrangement of the text, done with the greatest care; the composition of the music of "Œdipus at Colonos;" the finishing of the violin-concerto already mentioned, and the "C-minor Trio" (Op. 66); the last collection of "Songs without Words," and other minor works, — are probably to be ascribed to that restful season in a city where he always felt himself most at home.

In the summer of 1846, Mendelssohn came again to Leipzig; and it was hoped and confidently expected by many, that he would be induced to remain there. The concert-season promised to be an exceedingly brilliant one. Mendelssohn and Gade were to be connected

in the direction. Miss Dolby had come from England as a solo singer, and Jenny Lind had also promised her assistance. Without going into all the details of that winter's memorable enjoyments, I will only recount a few in brief. On the 23d of October, Mendelssohn directed the performance of Robert Schumann's "B-flat Symphony," and gave the most satisfactory proof with what pious loyalty he could and would treat the works of those who were generally considered his rivals. Under Schumann's own direction, this product of his own Muse could hardly have been given with such precision and clearness. At the close of that concert, David played Mendelssohn's recently written violin-concerto, a work inferior to no other since Beethoven and Spohr for that instrument; and which David, inspired by the presence of his friend, surpassed even himself in playing. On the 4th of December appeared the queen of song, the unequalled enchantress who united in her bell-like tones the purity and tenderness of the north with the glow and fervor of the south. She sang in the first concert the "Casta diva" from "Norma;" and, with Miss Dolby, the duet from "Romeo;" the recitative and aria from "Don Juan," "I cruel? O my love!" and the two songs of Mendelssohn, "On the wings of song," and "Gently stealeth through my soul." The last was never before sung as it was then; and perhaps even she who sang it will never again repeat the excellence of that night. At

another concert, Jenny Lind sang a scena and aria from "Figaro," scena and aria from the "Freischütz," a portion of the finale of "Euryanthe," and Swedish songs. Mendelssohn played his "G-minor Concerto," and a "Song without Words." It was delightful to see in co-operation the greatest productive genius of the age in music, and the greatest living vocal interpreter of music; the poet who sang without words, and the singer who translated the song back to poetry. Mendelssohn set great value, as indeed he could not fail to do, on the genius and power of Jenny Lind. He rejoiced at the enthusiasm of the public as much as or more than any. "Oh, yes!" he once said dryly, "she is a very 'nice' (*brave*) person." If any one could have struck through these words to all that he meant, to all that was in his mind at the time, he would have discovered a thorough appreciation of the purity, the sincerity, the earnestness, with which Jenny Lind approached her art. On seeing a passage in the "German General Gazette," which some great admirer of the singer had inserted, and which some had said was overdone, Mendelssohn said, "No, one word too much!"

In October, the "Œdipus at Colonos" was given twice in succession at Berlin, with music by Mendelssohn; and in November or December, Racine's "Athalie," with music also by him, was played in the Palace Theatre at Charlottenburg. In January, Mendelssohn directed

in person an admirable performance of the "Midsummer Night's Dream," at Leipzig. Our noble orchestra, electrified by the presence of the master, surpassed itself. The fairy passages, the scherzo particularly, were given with the delicacy of a hushed breath. At the farewell concert of Miss Dolby, Mendelssohn played his rondo in E-flat major. When Jenny Lind took leave of Leipzig in April, 1846, Mendelssohn played, with David, Beethoven's "G-major Sonata," then the "C-sharp Minor Sonata," and a "Song without Words." This concert is the more memorable, as the last one in which Mendelssohn played the piano-forte publicly in Leipzig. As in the grand concerts, so also in the "Quartet Evenings," he was active, to the joy of all true friends of music. On these occasions, he applied himself to the task of bringing to light the rarely heard great piano-forte works of Beethoven's latter period. Thus he played the great sonata in C minor (Op. 111). Of his own compositions, the chief was the performance of his trio in C minor (No. 2, Op. 66), David and Wittmann playing with Mendelssohn. It is similar in character to that in D minor, but is more grave and serious.

CHAPTER XIII.

The "Elijah." — Conducts the Music Festivals at Aix-la-Chapelle, Liège, and Cologne. — Goes to England to direct the First Performance of "Elijah" at Birmingham. — Brilliant Success of the Oratorio. — Instance of Mendelssohn's Facility in Composition. — Declining Health. — His Sister Fanny's Death. — Its Effect upon him. — He seeks Alleviation in renewed Activity. — Retires to Switzerland. — Begins the Oratorio of "Christ," and the Opera "Loreley." — Sickness and sudden Death.

DURING all this outward activity, he was straining all his productive energies to complete that work, on which he had been toiling, in quiet indeed, but actively and lovingly, for a number of years. It was his "Elijah," which he was to direct for the first time at the great musical festival at Birmingham in August, 1846. At the beginning of June, the work was so far advanced that he could send the voice parts. The text, compiled from the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth chapters of the First Book of Kings, was translated by Mr. Bartholomew, known as a skilful translator of German into English. The oratorio opens with Elijah's prophecy of famine, followed by the wails of the sufferers: then the departure of Elijah, the restoring to life of the widow's son, the destruction of the priests of Baal, the opening of heaven; followed by a noble chorus full of thanksgiving that now the waters are poured out.

This closes the first part. The second part includes the persecution and flight of Elijah, his translation, and the prophecy of the Messiah. We shall add later a few words on the musical features of this great work.

What was wanting in Mendelssohn's outward activity the past year seemed now doubly and trebly made up. He assumed the direction of not less than three musical festivals, following each other in rapid succession. First, at Aix-la-Chapelle, which was honored with the presence and co-operation of Jenny Lind. From Aix his friend, Julius Rietz, invited him to a *soirée* projected by him. At this, Mendelssohn played the piano-forte part of the B-flat trio of Beethoven; his own sonata with 'cello (Rietz) in B flat; and three "Songs without words." He then went to Liège, to the performance of his "Lauda Sion," which he had composed for the great religious festival to be held there. There they played in the market-place in his honor, with stringed instruments, his "Meeresstille" overture, of which the *Stille* must have been listened to in profound silence. From Liège he went to Cologne to take the direction of a great musical festival there. For this occasion he had set Schiller's "Festival Song to Artists" to music, from the words, "For manhood's crown to you is given: preserve it well:" a noble text, which with Mendelssohn's music, and sung by more than three thousand voices, must have produced a profound impression. Besides

this, he directed other pieces, — his "Bacchus Chorus," from the "Antigone;" a Te Deum by Bernhard Klein; and the chorus, "O Isis and Osiris," from the "Magic Flute." From this festival he turned his steps back to Leipzig. I spoke with him about the Cologne Festival. He seemed, on the whole, well satisfied with it. The material annoyances of the festival, the monstrous extortions of the Cologne landlords, &c., could not, of course, affect *him;* the gigantic massing of vocal material had amused him; and the patriotic element, the sympathetic blending of nationalities, Flemish and German, had pleased him. Musically, the chorus, "O Isis and Osiris," had been the most satisfactory to him. On the whole, he was in the best of humors; praised the Düsseldorf Festival, soon to occur; and promised to let us know if any thing very remarkable would be produced there. This request, alas! he never fulfilled. It was the last time that he ever visited his favorite Düsseldorf.

About the middle of August, Mendelssohn went to England, to direct the production of his "Elijah" at the great Birmingham Festival, which was to take place at the very close of the month. The programme of this festival was made up from the master-works of men like Handel, Haydn, Beethoven, and Cherubini. The new oratorio was awaited with the most eager interest. It was first produced Wednesday morning, the 26th of August, in the great Town Hall of Birmingham.

It came between Haydn's "Creation" on Tuesday and Handel's "Messiah" on Thursday; followed on Friday by Beethoven's "Missa Solemnis" in D. The London correspondent of the "Signals for the Musical World" writes concerning the first impression of "Elijah:" "How shall I describe what to-day has been in the Music Hall? After such an intense enjoyment, it is a hard task to express one's feelings in cold words. It was a great day for the festival, a great day for the performers, a great day for Mendelssohn, a great day for art. Four da capos in the first part, four in the second, making eight encores, and at the close the calling-out of the composer, are significant facts, when one considers that it was the rigid injunction of the committee that the public should not testify its approval by applause. But the enthusiasm would be checked by no rules: when the heart is full, regulations must stand aside. It was a noble scene, the hall filled with men, the galleries gay with ladies, like so many tulip-beds, added to the princely music, and these thundering bravos." This was the judgment from England; but what was said in Germany of the work? I will not do what so many critics have done who have passed their verdict on what they do not understand in the slightest. It has not been in my power to give this oratorio that full study which is needed to fully appreciate a great part of its claims; but there is no mistaking the voice of

full and cordial approval which has passed judgment on it in Germany. So far as I permit myself to speak, I will say that the choruses are far grander, more energetic, and more dramatic than in "St. Paul;" and there is not wanting that inimitable warmth of piety, peculiar to Mendelssohn alone among the later composers. The wonderful chorus, "Blessed are the men that fear him;" the Baal chorus; the chorus that renders thanks for rain; and that which recounts the ascension to heaven, — are truly great and thrillingly effective.

I must here speak of a little occurrence at the Birmingham Festival, which throws a clear light on Mendelssohn's presence of mind, and on his faculty of instant concentration. On the last day, among other things, Handel's Anthem was given. The concert was already going on, when it was discovered that the short recitative which precedes the "Coronation Hymn," and which the public had in the printed text, was lacking in the voice parts. The directors were perplexed. Mendelssohn, who was sitting in an ante-room of the hall, heard of it, and said, "Wait, I will help you." He sat down directly at a table, and composed the music for the recitative and the orchestral accompaniment in about half an hour. It was at once transcribed, and given without any rehearsal. The inspiration of the moment worked on the performers as it did on the composer the passage went very finely.

Can it be wondered at, that, after a life so full of labors, and the incredible excitement and strain of this summer, on his return to Leipzig, Mendelssohn was taken sick? Yet he undertook to lead the subscription concerts, in connection with Gade, and worked hard to bring out in the best manner Beethoven's symphonies; as, for example, those in B flat, and in F major, which we had never heard so finely rendered. He also assisted in bringing before the world a new symphony in C major by Robert Schumann. But he brought out nothing new of his own; nor indeed did he give much of what he had written before. We heard nothing of his, excepting the scena and aria, the overture "Meeresstille," and the "A-minor Symphony." Besides this, Madame Dulken played his concerto in D minor, and Clara Schumann that in G minor. Yet the whole course of concerts was excellent, and the programmes selected mostly from classical music. The historical concerts, which were continued after the manner of former seasons, Mendelssohn was not well enough to attend. Playing in public was forbidden him by his physician. He often complained much of headache. He was hardly prevailed upon to undertake to direct the performance of "St. Paul," which took place in St. Paul's Church, on Good Friday, 1847. He accounted for his great reserve as to appearing in public by pleading that he needed time for composition. He must labor

till he was forty; then he would rest, he said. Yet, in fulfilment of a promise, he went directly after "St. Paul" had been given to England, to direct the bringing-out of "Elijah," at Exeter Hall in London, under the auspices of the Sacred Harmonic Society. Towards the close of April, "Elijah" was given three times in succession and with great applause in Exeter Hall, under Mendelssohn's direction. During this time he attended an excellent performance of "Elijah" at Manchester. On the 11th of May, in the presence of the royal family, he directed his music to the "Midsummer Night's Dream;" and played Beethoven's G-major Concerto with improvised cadences, charming his hearers, and leaving an impression which could not be forgotten. On his return he arrived at Frankfort, where he joined his family; when, like a lightning-stroke, the news of his sister Fanny's sudden death reached him. She died a genuine artist's death. In the midst of a rehearsal of the choruses of the second part of "Faust," which she had written, stimulated by her brother's earnest wish that she should compose, overcome with a nervous attack, she sank dead upon her chair. Mendelssohn was fearfully shattered by this stroke. He had been bound to this sister by the strongest possible ties of sympathy. In earlier days they had composed together; so that in the first collection of songs it is not always plain which are to be attributed

to the brother, and which to the sister; and, in later days, they interchanged musical ideas, often betraying a wonderful intellectual affinity. The first news of Fanny's death drew a loud shriek from Mendelssohn. Nor was this all. His physician declared that his own death, which followed soon, was caused by the rupture of a blood-vessel in the head, at the moment of this sudden shock; the effusion of blood upon the brain led to increasing headaches, and, finally, to death. The death of the sister was thus the cause of the death of the brother. Yet, doubtless, his constitution was undermined long before by the intensity of his labors; and, when the last shock came to him, it found him ready to fall an easy victim. The extreme sensitiveness of his nervous system, even before the tidings of Fanny's death, is shown by the fact that sometimes he could not hear music without weeping. But who could find it in his heart to blame him for laboring so long as power in him lay, when such a labor-loving soul always prompted him to activity? "Let me work a little longer," he used to say to his wife, when she urged him to spare himself; "the time for me to rest will soon be here." And to friends who remonstrated with him he used to say, as if in premonition of his early death, "I must use the little season that is at my disposal: I do not know how long it will last."

He sought alleviation for the wound of his soul in

new activity. At first, indeed, he could not compose. He writes in a letter, "I can only work mechanically." He tarried for a time in Baden-Baden, to dissipate his grief. Thence he went to Switzerland; and, in viewing the grandeur of that land, and by resolving to create and finish something worthy of that inspiring scenery, he soon recovered the old strength of his spirit. He purposed to go on to Vevay, on the Lake of Geneva; but, on account of the political disquiet there, he chose Interlachen, in the Bernese Oberland, as the home of himself and family for a time. Here he would often labor whole unbroken days, and then he would ramble for days among the mountains. Two works occupied him mainly: a new oratorio, "Christ," and an opera, "Lorelei," for which Emanuel Geibel had written the text. The oratorio was laid out on a grand scale. It was to be in three parts, — the career on earth, the descent into hell, the ascent to heaven. Some fragments of it were completed. One act of the opera, too, was finished. He also wrote two quartets, in F minor and D minor, and some motets and songs. On the 18th of September, he turned back to Leipzig. His manner was then, as a friend told me, tolerably quiet and cheerful, only he complained of the "oppressive Leipzig air." A journey to Berlin, and a week's visit there amid the scenes of his sister's life, opened his wound afresh. Yet, after this mournful occasion, he retained

his self-command astonishingly. He had the soprano part of "Elijah" sung in his presence by the lady already alluded to, who most thoroughly understood his works, and who was in the most perfect sympathy with him He expressed the satisfaction he took in his new opera, and in the prospect of directing his "Elijah" at Vienna, after which he would immediately have it brought out at Leipzig, and would conduct the rehearsals himself. On the 9th of October, he brought his friend a new collection of his songs, among them the "Night Song" of Eichendorff, "Vergangen ist der lichte Tag," which he must have composed while thinking of his departed sister. It was his last composition. While she was singing some of these songs to him, he fell suddenly in a swoon, and had to be carried to his bed. Yet he revived again from this attack. On the 28th o October, he walked out with his wife, and ate his dinner with a good appetite. But the swoon soon recurred with more violence than before. He lay for a long time unconscious. When, at last, he rallied, he complained of a bitter headache. Yet his condition grew somewhat better, and the physicians did not give up all hope. And now the danger in which lay a life so dear to all was known to the whole city. Interest and anxiety were depicted on all countenances. Everywhere there were inquiries after the sick man's welfare. Once more he came to himself, and answered some questions.

which were put to him; and he seemed to know the by standers. How many prayers went to Heaven in that little snatch of respite! But it was otherwise determined in the councils of the Almighty. On the 3d of November, he was robbed of all consciousness. He never revived again. On the 4th of November, in the evening, he quietly sank to his rest. His noble features soon assumed an almost glorified expression. So much he looked like one in sleep, that some of his friends thought it could not be death; an illusion which is often granted to the eye of love. His friends Bendemann and Hübner took a cast of his features as he lay The sculptor Knaur used this as the model for his bust.

CHAPTER XIV.

General Grief over his Loss. — Imposing Obsequies. — His Remains are carried to Berlin. Honors all along the Way. — The Berlin Solemnities. — Honors paid to his Memory in Foreign Lands as well as throughout Germany. — Depth of Sorrow at Leipzig, and its Manifestation.

THE grief over the loss of the beloved composer was, at the outset, boundless. It seemed as if a general gloom had fallen on the whole city. Hundreds of mourners pressed into the house to have one last look at the familiar features; and the family, with a noble generosity, placed no barrier in the way. Mild and peaceful, he lay in his narrow bed, like one who waits, with earnest though joyful look, for the judgment-day; decked with palm and laurel, tokens of his well-won fame, which friends brought to crown his mortal remains, though they stood in little need of any outward signs of honor. Not long after, arrangements were made by his nearest friends to celebrate his obsequies by a worthy tribute of affection and reverence. They took place on the 7th of November, at four o'clock in the afternoon, in St. Paul's Church. Four horses, in black accoutrements and cloths, drew the carriage containing the coffin, covered with palm-branches, laurel-wreaths,

and flowers. The rich pall was borne by his friends and fellow-artists, Robert Schumann, David, Gade, Hauptmann, Rietz, and Moscheles. Before the bier walked the members of the orchestra and all the choirs of the city, the teachers and the students of the Conservatorium; directly behind the bier were the nearest relatives, the brother and the brothers-in-law of the deceased; then the clergy, civil officers, professors in the University, officers in the army, and an immense throng of friends and admirers, marching to the church, with measured tread, to the sound of dirges played by the combined bands of the city. Moscheles had arranged the "Song without Words" in E minor (fifth set), for wind-instruments, for the occasion. Arrived at the church, the coffin was placed on a catafalque draped in black, surrounded by six wax-candles, burning in lofty candelabra, while the organ pealed forth a prelude from "Antigone" — the passage where Creon bears in the body of his son Hæmon. A student from the Conservatorium then laid at the master's feet a silver wreath wrought in imitation of laurel. The choir struck in thereupon with the hymn, "Acknowledge me, my guardian," in which the whole congregation joined. Then followed that royal choral out of the "St. Paul," "To thee, O Lord, I give myself away;" after which, the preacher Howard delivered a plain but appropriate address in memory of the departed, and closed with a

touching prayer. Then rang out grandly that sublime chorus from "St. Paul," which follows the burial of Stephen, "Behold, we count them happy who endure;" and, after the benediction, the closing chorus from Sebastian Bach's "Passion Music," "We sit down in tears, and cry unto thee in thy grave, Sweetly rest, sweetly rest!" There was not a soul present that was not edified, consoled, and strengthened by this burial-service. When the whole great assembly had left the church, a noble figure entered, clad in deep mourning, kneeled at the coffin, and prayed. It was she, the wife, who brought the last offering of love.

The coffin, with its precious enclosure, was carried in the night, by an extra train, to Berlin. As the car came into Cöthen, at midnight, it was greeted with a choral from the Singers' Union of that place. At the station in Dessau, at half-past one in the morning, stood the Nestor of music, Friedrich Schneider, surrounded by a choir of singers, — the old man's head bare, and his eyes filled with tears, — and they sang a hymn which he had composed solely to do honor to the departed master of song. When the coffin, with its beautiful burden of flowers and waving palms, had arrived at the Anhalt station at Berlin, it was transferred to the hearse, while a choir sang the choral, "Jesus, my trust." The cathedral choir sang the same choral, while the solemn procession was entering, with the first rays of the rising

sun, the churchyard before the Halle Gate. Berduscheck, a clergyman who was on terms of intimacy with the Mendelssohn Family, pronounced a funeral oration, so suitable and so affecting, that no eye looked on that was not filled with tears. After this, the members of the Sing-Academie, and a number of the Opera artists, under Rungenhagen's direction, sang the hymn, "How peaceful do they rest;" to which the cathedral choir replied in a strain, composed by Grell for this occasion, so touchingly sweet, that it seemed like the song of angels. The body of Mendelssohn was deposited in the family vault, by the side of his sister.

Within human memory, no event has called out such deep and universal sorrow in the cultivated world as the death of this great master of song. Only the burial of Raphael, described for us by Vasari, can be compared with it. Not only through Germany, but England, solemn services were held in honor of the departed. In Berlin, an expressive musical tribute was arranged by Kapellmeister Taubert. The funeral-march from Beethoven's "Eroica" was played; then a Kyrie was sung; after which the "A-minor Symphony," and the "Midsummer Night's Dream" and "Hebrides" overtures were given; finally, a psalm in church-style, and the air, "It is in God's counsels declared," were sung. This formed one of the closing symphony *soirées*. The Sing-Academie would not be outdone in rendering him honor,

and appointed, in memory of Mendelssohn, a second performance of his "Elijah," of which the first had taken place the very day before the author's death. The celebration in Vienna was, however, the most imposing of all On the 15th of November, the first performance of the "Elijah" was given, at which it had been expected that Mendelssohn would himself be present. The large array of solo singers were clad in complete black; the ladies of the chorus, in white, with a stripe of black satin on the left side. The desk on which the conductor's score would have lain was decked in black crape. Here Mendelssohn himself would have stood; for it had been hoped that he would conduct in person. On the desk lay a roll of manuscript music, and a fresh wreath of laurel: at another stand stood the conductor who took Mendelssohn's place, — Herr Schmidl. After the first measures of the piece, Mlle. Weissbach stepped forward, and recited a prologue written for the occasion by a leading editor of Vienna. In London, the Sacred Harmonic Society gave, on the 17th day of November, a performance of "Elijah." All present were clad in black. The concert opened with Handel's "Dead March" from "Saul," to which the whole congregation listened, standing. This society intend to erect a monument in memory of Mendelssohn, to which Prince Albert and the Queen have contributed liberally.

But the musical celebration, in Leipzig, of the great

composer's death, was one of the most fitly solemn and affecting. A concert was to have been given the very day that Mendelssohn died; but it had to be postponed, for no player or singer would consent to perform while he was known to be in the agonies of death; and hardly any true lover of music would have been willing to attend a concert at such a time. The programme of the first concert given (Nov. 11) after his decease bore at the top the words, "In memory of the departed Mendelssohn Bartholdy." The first part contained the following compositions of his, — Luther's prayer, "In mercy grant us peace;" the overture to "Melusina;" "Night Song" by Eichendorff, "Departed is the light of day;" motet, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace" (written in Switzerland); and the overture to "St. Paul." Beethoven's "Eroica" formed the second part. Thus was pictured, in most skilful and happy manner, the whole career of Mendelssohn: his noble aspiration to what is lofty, nay, divine; his highest earthly love; the intense anguish which threaded his whole life; his resignation to God's will, after he had filled up the measure of his lot; and the voice which summons him to the resurrection. It displayed, too, his love for the greatest master of his own art; and the place, close by and only second to Beethoven's, which his works will hold in all coming time. Eichendorff's song was sung by a lady, who

was, perhaps, the nearest to Mendelssohn's affections, of all *artistes*, and came from her very heart; yet it was rendered with great power and self-command. In the quartet of the motet, Mendelssohn's old friend, Schleinitz, who had not sung in public for a long time, took a part; and also the two artists who had first helped, under Mendelssohn, to raise the Leipzig concerts to their great eminence, — Pögner and Mme. Grabau-Bünau. The hall, hardly large enough to hold the multitude which poured in, might have been taken that night for a house of mourning, and the throng for a great family, weeping for some dear one taken from its midst. No hand was raised for applause: in mournful silence the audience listened. It seemed as if Mendelssohn's spirit were in the room, and were holding communion with each heart.

Cologne, Bremen, Magdeburg, Frankfort-on-the-Main, Mayence, Breslau, Altenburg, and other cities, each as it best could, held solemn musical ceremonies in honor of the great departed. But kings did not remain behind their people in rendering to him the tribute of illustrious respect. Queen Victoria and the Kings of Prussia and Saxony sent to the mourning widow letters of hearty sympathy and consolation, and in terms of the highest regard and homage for the genius of her husband. No prince, save the Elector of Hesse, placed any hinderance in the way of these deserved tributes of

affection; and he has the sole bad eminence of forbidding his Kapellmeister, Spohr, to celebrate the demise of his illustrious friend. Let the eminent director of music in Hesse enjoy the consolation of knowing, that no petty prince's interdict can prevent any heart in *all* Germany, that loves what is beautiful and good, from cherishing the memory of the immortal Mendelssohn!

CHAPTER XV.

Sketch of Mendelssohn's Personal Appearance. — His Christian Character. — His Kindness, Geniality, and Courtesy. — His restless Activity. — His Cordiality to other great Artists. — Liszt's Visit to Leipzig, and his Reception by Mendelssohn. — Hector Berlioz at Leipzig. — Spohr's Visit.

THE works of Mendelssohn are certain to gain for him an unceasing interest. It is impossible, therefore, to give any adequate sketch of his life, without touching more or less fully upon his personal appearance, — his presence, so to speak. He was a man rather under the ordinary stature and size, somewhat neglectful of his personal appearance, yet graceful in his walk and bearing. His head was covered with glossy black hair, curling in light locks; his forehead, as befitted the head which teemed with such a burden of thought and feeling, was high and arched; his features sharply cut, but noble. His eyes were unspeakably expressive: when they glowed with indignation, or looked at you with estrangement, too much to bear; but, in his general friendly mood, indescribably charming; his nose, noble, and inclined to the Roman type; his mouth, firm, fine, in his serious moods more than dignified, authoritative I might say, yet capable of the

sweetest smile and the most winning expression. In this graceful, finely moulded form was hidden not only a royal spirit, but a most kindly heart. To speak out in a single word what was the most salient feature of his character, he was a Christian in the fullest sense. He knew and he loved the Bible as few do in our time: out of his familiarity with it grew his unshaken faith, and that profound spiritual-mindedness without which it would have been impossible for him to produce those deep-felt sacred compositions; and, besides this, the other principle of the genuine Christian life, love, was powerful in him. God had blessed him with a large measure of this world's goods; but he made a noble use of them. He carried the biblical injunction into effect, to "visit the widow and the fatherless in their affliction;" and he knew that to feed the hungry and to clothe the naked is a fast acceptable to the Lord. His threshold was always besieged by the needy of all sorts, but his kindness knew no bounds; and the delicacy and consideration with which he treated the recipients of his bounty largely increased the worth of his gifts, valuable as they were, even in a merely material sense. Since he died, deed upon deed has come to light, which I am not at liberty here to relate, out of courtesy to the receiver, out of consideration to the giver, which only shows how literally he fulfilled the Saviour's injunction, not to let the left hand know what the right hand doeth.

But what is to be reckoned largely to his credit is, that, with his worldly advantages, he cherished such a love of work; that he was a man of such restless activity. Many successful wooers of the German Muse have been the children of poverty, and, without the stimulus of necessity, would have always been unknown: in many a man of genius, the sad experience has been repeated, that, so soon as Fortune smiled, his genius has been soothed to easy slumbers; but Mendelssohn, born in the lap of luxury, never gave himself with easy resignation to a life of contentment with worldly comforts: he only used his wealth as a means of giving his talents the more exclusively to his art; he did not compose in order to live, but he lived in order to compose. I must grant that this impulse to labor was the law of his nature. To be idle was for him to die. Sometimes, while his pupils in the Conservatorium were engaged on their tasks, he would execute charming little landscapes with his pen, which he used to gather up, and carry home. No little thing was able to disturb him when he composed. The place was indifferent. Sometimes, on his journeys, he would seat himself at a table as soon as he had reached an inn, and had established himself for a tarry, long or short, for dinner or for the night, "to write his notes," as he used to say. What he was to his wife and his children, despite this ceaseless activity, I need not try to tell. Enough to

say, that he was the most devoted of husbands, the most affectionate of fathers. Whoever did not know him intimately, and perceive how careful he was to shield himself from over-excitement, and every kind of influence which should jar upon him, would hardly suspect that his heart was framed for friendship, and that he was a very approachable man. But the large number of his intimate correspondents; the openness with which he revealed himself to them; the hearty interest in their work and welfare; and especially the close bonds which bound him to his friends in Düsseldorf, London, and Leipzig; the rich store of communications which his friends still hold,—declare the very opposite. Of course, a man like him could not open his nature to every one who approached: this was sheerly impossible. He was in much the same position as Goethe, though with a far warmer and more communicative nature than he. But Mendelssohn carried to an almost morbid extent an unwillingness to allude to any thing pertaining to himself. From principle, he almost never read what was written about himself; and he was very unwilling that any thing, musical criticism excepted, should be published about him. The will of a living man must be law in such a matter as this: I trust that a desire to paint him worthily, now he has left us, would not offend his pure nature. Enthusiasm, such as greeted him so often, indeed so constantly, was not grateful to him: he

had seen so much that was factitious, that he distrusted the real, excepting upon the fullest evidence that it was real. Discriminating praise, however, gratified him. That he was sometimes irritated, and out of tune, so to speak, as one may of a musical artist; that he was occasionally subject to a temporary ill-humor, — no one who knew him well, will deny: but so finely strung a nature must be exceedingly sensitive; and one who carried in his mind such a burden of thoughts might well be pardoned for neglecting other men's talk sometimes, and giving full vent to himself. His whole education and training had been such as to fit him for the most polished society. In large gatherings, he was, for the most part, very much reserved; especially where he did not think it worth while to make much effort: but, if he did once break the silence, word followed word, each weighty and comprehensive; his enunciation became very rapid; his countenance was all aflame; and, as his knowledge compassed all departments of learning, he wandered at his will over the whole domain of science and art. In circles of his nearest friends, where he felt entirely at home, and did not fear being misunderstood, he was often merry and free to the very last extent of unrestraint. Larger circles he used often to enliven with graceful contributions of his art; and the social gatherings of the Leipzig singers remember his presence with the greatest inter-

est. Especially his four-part songs, both in the rehearsals and when they sang them at the table, gave to all the highest pleasure. At such times, Mendelssohn was the very picture of amiability, the very personification of a lovely character.

A very beautiful feature in Mendelssohn is his treatment of other artists, particularly those whose direction differed widely from his own. That he should be on the kindest terms with such men as Moscheles, Rietz, and David, whose career ran in parallel course with his own, and who were, moreover, his personal friends, is not at all to be wondered at. Yet it would not seem surprising, if, with the singleness of his devotion to his profession, and the intense earnestness with which he approached music, with the exactness — and perhaps I might say, the rigid severity — of his self-discipline, he had turned away somewhat coldly from those whose life's course did not coincide with his own. Yet this was very seldom the case. In his judgments on the efforts of artists personally unknown to him, he was very careful and considerate; yet the play of his features was an excellent barometer of his feelings. The vast numbers of virtuosos whose merit lies alone in their rapid execution, he bore with great patience. He did not refuse to acknowledge this kind of skill, while often pained to the soul at the ill-treatment which great masterpieces suffered at the hands of such inter-

preters. But, where soul and taste were associated with the mechanical talent, he was the first to express his satisfaction, and to speak words of approbation; and to such artists he was the kindest benefactor. Some examples may show this. In January, 1840, Franz Liszt came to Leipzig, for the first time, to give concerts. By reason of the somewhat mercantile aspect of his agent's conduct, and the prominence which the latter gave to the preliminary business arrangements, together with some unwonted changes which he made in the Music Hall, the public judgment was arrayed against Liszt, even before he made his appearance. When he seated himself at the piano, he was not only not greeted with applause, but there were actually a few hisses heard. Liszt cast a defiant glance at the audience, and struck out into his finest style, fairly compelling the disaffected to forget their prejudice for the moment, and applaud. Still for this there was an unpleasant gulf between Liszt and the Leipzig musical public. The reconciliation was but momentary. In this emergency, what did Mendelssohn do? He gave Liszt a brilliant *soirée* in the hall of the Gewandhaus, to which he invited half the musical world of Leipzig; and provided not only a feast of melody fit for the gods, but a substantial banquet of earthly delicacies besides. It was a party on the grandest scale; and he and his wife played the parts of host and hostess in the

most graceful and winning style. Madame Mendelssohn, clad in a simple white dress, moved up and down among her guests like a fair visitant from heaven. The music on that brilliant occasion was equal to the demands of the hour; and it may be said without exaggeration, that perhaps Liszt never heard finer in his life. At his desire, there were given the then new "C-major Symphony" by Schubert, the Forty-second Psalm, and some passages from Mendelssohn's "St. Paul." At the close, Mendelssohn played Bach's triple-concerto with Liszt and Hiller. The manner with which the great Leipzig master comported himself towards the unwelcome stranger completely won over the musical public of the city; and, when Liszt gave his next concert, he was received and dismissed with the greatest applause.

The next instance of Mendelssohn's magnanimity occurred in 1843. In February of that year, Hector Berlioz came from Weimar to Leipzig. He knew that his own direction diverged fundamentally from that of Mendelssohn's, and feared that his reception by the latter would be rather cool. Chelard of Weimar encouraged him to write to Mendelssohn. Mendelssohn's answer was as follows: "Dear Berlioz, I thank you heartily for your pleasant letter, and am rejoiced that you still remember our old friendship in Rome. I shall never forget it in my life, and shall be glad to talk it over with you. Every thing that I can do to make your

stay in Leipzig agreeable to you, I shall make it equally my duty and my pleasure to do. I believe I can assure you that you will be happy here, and be satisfied with artists and the public." (Then follow some passages regarding the preliminary details of a concert.) "I charge you to come as soon as you can leave Weimar. I shall rejoice to give you my hand, and to bid you welcome to Germany. Do not laugh at my bad French, as you used to do at Rome, but remain my friend, as you were then; and I shall always be your own Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy."

Berlioz came to Leipzig during the rehearsals of the "Walpurgis Night," which appeared to him a masterpiece. He reminded Mendelssohn of their residence * at Rome, and their experience at the Baths of Caracalla (where Berlioz had made fun of Mendelssohn's belief in immortality, retribution after death, providence, &c.); and asked him to make him a present of his director's

* One evening we were exploring together the Baths of Caracalla, debating the question of the merit or demerit of human actions, and their remuneration during this life. As I replied with some enormity, I know not what, to his entirely religious and orthodox opinions, his foot slipped, and down he rolled, with many scratches and contusions, in the ruins of a very hard staircase. "Admire the divine justice," said I, helping him to rise: "it is I who blaspheme, and it is you who fall!" This impiety, accompanied with peals of laughter, appeared to him too much, it seemed; and, from that time, religious discussions were always avoided." — *Berlioz's Musical Tour in Germany.*

staff, which Mendelssohn willingly gave him, only on this condition, that Berlioz should give his in return. Although, with the repeated rehearsals of the "Walpurgis Night," Mendelssohn was completely exhausted, yet he helped Berlioz to organize his own concert, and treated him, to use his own words, like a brother.

But one of the fairest honors which one great artist ever paid another was the brilliant *soirée* which Mendelssohn gave in honor of Spohr's visit to Leipzig, the 25th of June, 1846. Only selections from Spohr's music were given, — the overture to "Faust," an aria from "Jessonda," the violin-concerto in E minor (played by Joachim), two songs with clarionet accompaniment, and the "Consecration of the Tones." It must have been a rare pleasure to Spohr to have seen his works brought out in the perfection of the Leipzig Conservatorium, and under Mendelssohn's direction; and, to the public, it was a great delight to see these two eminent composers side by side. At the close, Spohr went into the orchestra; and, to manifest his pleasure at the manner in which his pieces had been brought out, he directed the last two movements of his symphony with all the old fire of youth.

CHAPTER XVI.

Wonderful Union of the Highest Gifts in Mendelssohn. — His Power as a Conductor. — Incidents. — His Skill as a Virtuoso. — His Greatness as a Composer. — Conclusion.

WHAT gave Mendelssohn so great a compass to his musical activities was the union, in the highest perfection, of three gifts which are usually granted only singly to men in the measure with which he commanded them. He was as great as a conductor, as he was as virtuoso and composer. His fame as a conductor is now world-wide. When once his fine, firm hand grasped the *bâton*, the electric fire of Mendelssohn's nature seemed to stream out through it, and be felt at once by singers, orchestra, and audience. We often thought that the flames which streamed from the heads of Castor and Pollux must play around his forehead, and break from the conductor's staff which he held, to account for the wonderful manner with which he dissipated the slightest trace of phlegm in the singers or players under his direction. But Mendelssohn conducted not only with his *bâton*, but with his whole body. At the outset, when he took his place at the music-stand, his countenance was wrapped in deep and almost

solemn earnestness. You could see at a glance that the temple of music was a holy place to him. As soon as he had given the first beat, his face lighted up, every feature was aflame, and the play of countenance was the best commentary on the piece. Often the spectator could anticipate from his face what was to come. The fortes and crescendos he accompanied with an energetic play of features and the most forcible action; while the decrescendos and pianos he used to modulate with a motion of both hands, till they slowly sank to almost perfect silence. He glanced at the most distant performers, when they should strike in, and often designated the instant when they should pause, by a characteristic movement of the hand, which will not be forgotten by those who ever saw it. He had no patience with performers who did not keep good time. His wondrously accurate ear made him detect the least deviation from the correct tone, in the very largest number of singers and players. He not only heard it, but knew whence it came. Once, during a grand per formance, when there were about three hundred singers and over two hundred instruments, all in chorus, in the midst of the music, he addressed a young lady who stood not far from him, and said to her, in a kindly way, "F, not F sharp" [*F, liebes Fräulein, nicht Fis*]. To singers, his rehearsals were a constant enjoyment. His praise was always delightfully stimulating; his

criticism, not chilling nor disheartening. By throwing in all kinds of bright and merry words, he knew how to rouse the most indifferent and idle to the best performance they were capable of, and to keep the weary in good-humor. Repeated and perverse carelessness would provoke him, but never to a coarse or harsh word: he had too much knowledge of the world, and too much grace of character, for that; the farthest he went was to a dash of sarcasm. "Gentlemen," he once said to a number of men who insisted on talking together after the signal to begin had been given, "I have no doubt that you have something very valuable to talk about; but I beg you to postpone it now: this is the place to sing." This was the strongest reproof that I ever heard him give. Especially kindly was he when he praised the singing of ladies. "Really," said he once, when a chorus went passably well at the first singing, "very good, for the first time exceedingly good; but, because it is the first time, let us try it once again:" on which the whole body broke into a merry peal of laughter, and the second time they sang with great spirit. All prolonging of the tones beyond the time designated by the written notes, he would not suffer, not even at the close of the chorus. "Why do you linger so long on this note, gentlemen? it is only an eighth." He was just as averse to all monotonous singing. "Gentlemen," he once said at a rehearsal,

"remember this even when you sing at home; do not sing so as to put any one to sleep, even if it be a cradle-song." The pianos could not be sung too softly for him. Did the chorus only sink in a piano passage to a mezzo-forte, he would cry out, as if in pain, "Piano, piano, I hear no piano at all!" It was one of the remarkable features of his leading, to hear the largest choir sink at the right places into the faintest breath of sound. Mendelssohn's unwearied patience at rehearsals was all the more remarkable, as his frame was so delicate and his ear so sensitive; but it made the result, when *he* was satisfied with it, as perfect as any work can be in the hands of human performers.

Mendelssohn's skill as a virtuoso was no mere leger-demain, no enormous finger facility, that only aims to dazzle by trills, chromatic runs, and octave passages; it was that true, manly *virtus* from which the word virtuoso is derived; that steadfast energy which overcomes all mechanical hinderances, not to produce musical noise, but music, and not satisfied with any thing short of exhibiting the very spirit of productions written in every age of the musical art. The characteristic features of his playing were a very elastic touch, a wonderful trill, elegance, roundness, firmness, perfect articulation, strength, and tenderness, each in its needed place. His chief excellence lay, as Goethe said, in his giving every piece, from the Bach epoch down, its own dis-

tinctive character; and yet, with all his loyalty to the old masters, he knew just how to conceal their obsolete forms by adding new graces in the very manner of his playing. Especially beautiful was his playing of Beethoven's compositions, and the adagios most of all, which he rendered with unspeakable tenderness and depth of feeling. The soft passages were where his strength lay in his performance upon the piano-forte, as they were in his leading of a great choir; and in this no man has surpassed him, I might say no one has approached him. His skill on the tenor-viol has already been spoken of. He possessed a pleasant, but not strong tenor voice; but he never used it, excepting at the chorus rehearsals, or, at the practice of a soloist, to indicate a tone-figure or an interval, or, at the most, to sing a brief recitative.

To speak more at length of Mendelssohn as a composer is hardly necessary, as I have already detailed the history of about all his more important productions. These works speak for themselves; and, if they do not, no analysis of mine can speak for them. But, in fact, they stand in need neither of approval nor defence: the most audacious critic bows before the genius of their author: the power and weight of public opinion would strike every calumniator dumb. What so universally affects and pleases, must be true and beautiful. But what has made Mendelssohn's a classic

Muse? Foremost of all, the master's pure and lofty aspiration, which set for itself only the highest ideal, and did not bow before any throne, not even that of the world; his moral energy of will, which did not ask what pleased the multitude, but, listening only to the inspiration from within, broke for itself a victorious way through all obstacles. Then his universal culture, which made him at home in a great variety of spheres, enabled him to enter deeply into the nature of the given subject, and choose that form of representation which best harmonized with it. Music was to him utterly plastic; first the transparent clearness of his understanding suffered him to conceive of his object with noonday distinctness, and then his mastery of his art gave him a matchless power of expression. He always knew what he wanted to do; and, when he had once grasped his subject, he did not rest till the musical delineation perfectly corresponded to the idea: and his light hand wove all the graceful fabric, with almost magic skill, and with the speed of light. It is true, in all his greater works, his style is earnest, I might say, severe, throughout, — true to his models, and always worthy of his subject, — but never wearisome and heavy. Whether Mendelssohn treated a religious, a romantic, a lyric, an epic, or a dramatic theme, he always transported the hearer to the situation, transferred his own feeling to him, and held him to the very close in perfect

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satisfaction and unabated interest. The main thought was manifest at once; and it was invariably one which it was worth while to follow, through which heart and soul were mightily moved. Thus, in "St. Paul," the noble choral, "Awake, the voice calls us," discloses the entire burden of the piece; so, in the "Hymn of Praise," the wonderful theme, "Let all things that have breath, praise the Lord," running through the whole first movement, and re-appearing in the mighty chorus which ends the work; so, too, the first measures of the overture to "Antigone," pervaded by the deep earnestness and fire peculiar to the antique tragedy. To all these genuine artist-gifts, there was added the most needed one of all, — a fancy teeming with images, and able to present each thought in that ideal, characteristic dress which made it unmistakeable. The finest instances of this are his descriptive overtures, with their sumptuous tone-painting, always perfectly intelligible, yet never going too minutely into details. Thus, in the overture "The Hebrides," there are seen the moist, heavy fog, the gray, strange-shaped clouds; there are heard the simple song of the old bard, the dull crash of battle, and the maiden's lamentation, as she stands by the seashore, and waits for her lover, for whom she shall wait in vain. And, in the wave-like "Melusina" overture, does not the sea-nymph lift herself bodily, and offer herself in love to the brave knight? Even more

characteristic and lifelike in tone-color are the other two overtures which I have previously spoken of in some detail. Only a hearer utterly without fancy can fail to see what the artist meant to embody in music.

The last element of power that I will speak of in Mendelssohn was the depth of soul, the kindling fervor of his feeling, the profound and almost romantic melancholy, the tendency to revery, the light and airy sportiveness, — the last of which appeared especially in his smaller pieces, his trios, quartets, sonatas and songs with and without words, and which equally pleased and amazed the listener. In the "Songs without Words," Mendelssohn has created a new department of music, in which it is not wise for every one to be an imitator. It was a necessity with him to throw into artistic form the fulness of charming melodies with which his soul teemed, and to which there were no words at hand to wed them. The number of the songs which he wrote from this need of expression is a lasting proof of the rich world of tone in which his spirit lived. The text to his songs must be not merely musical in its flow, it must be thoroughly poetical, to correspond to the feelings to which Mendelssohn gave expression when he wrote his "Songs without Words;" for, when he had chosen his theme, he poured out a wealth of fantasy and feeling, of sympathy with nature, of noble aspiration, of thanksgiving and praise.

And here closes our poor tribute to this great man: a tribute, which, if it be weak in its execution, carries our heart with it. We lay down the pencil, and leave thy portrait, dear departed master; but we do not part from thee. Thy mortal part is given back to the earth whence it came; but the immortal part has gone to its true home. Yet may thy figure still hover over us, and with glorified features still teach us lessons of love; and may the spirit which lives in thy immortal works still animate us, and bid us shun all that is low and vain and worthless! May we all be led to live a life as full of glorious aspirations as thine was, till we come, as we shall at last, to the common goal, which ends every mortal career!

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

JULIUS BENEDICT'S SKETCH OF THE CAREER OF MENDELSSOHN.

[In December, 1849, Julius Benedict, a near friend of Mendelssohn, the eminent composer, teacher, and conductor, living now in London, and still remembered for his efficient direction, in this country, of Jenny Lind's concerts delivered a lecture before the Chamberwell Literary Institution, on the life and works of Mendelssohn. The lecture has real value, freshness, and interest; yet I have not needed to use it in full, since it repeats, of course, many facts already related with more detail in the narrative of Lampadius. Such passages as throw new light on Mendelssohn's career, especially in England, I have therefore detached from their connection, for insertion here. The entire Lecture may be found in the Boston "Athenæum."]

MY first meeting with Mendelssohn took place under such peculiar circumstances, that I may, perhaps, be permitted to enter into some particulars about it.

It was in the beginning of May, 1821, when walking in the streets of Berlin, with my master and friend Von Weber, he directed my attention to a boy, apparently about eleven or twelve years old, who, on perceiving the author of "Freischütz," ran towards him, giving him a most hearty and friendly greeting. "'Tis Felix

Mendelssohn," said Weber, introducing me at once to the prodigious child, of whose marvellous talent and execution I had already heard so much at Dresden. I shall never forget the impression of that day on beholding that beautiful youth, with his auburn hair clustering in ringlets round his shoulders, the look of his brilliant clear eyes, and the smile of innocence and candor on his lips. He would have it that we should go with him at once to his father's house; but, as Weber had to attend a rehearsal, he took me by the hand, and made me run a race till we reached his home. Up he went briskly to the drawing-room; where, finding his mother, he exclaimed, "Here is a pupil of Weber's, who knows a great deal of his music of the new opera! Pray, mamma, ask him to play it for us;" and so, with an irresistible impetuosity, he pushed me to the piano-forte, and made me remain there till I had exhausted all the store of my recollections. When I then begged of him to let me hear some of his own compositions, he refused, but played, *from memory*, such of Bach's fugues or Cramer's exercises as I could name. At last we parted, not without a promise to meet again. On my very next visit, I found him seated on a footstool, writing, with great earnestness, some music. On my asking him what he was about, he replied gravely, "I am finishing my new quartet for piano and stringed instruments."

I could not resist my own boyish curiosity to examine

this composition, and, looking over his shoulder, saw as beautiful a score as if it had been written by the most skilful copyist. It was his first quartet, in C minor, published afterwards as Opus 1.

But, whilst I was lost in admiration and astonishment at beholding the work of a master written by the hand of a boy, all at once he sprang up from his seat, and, in his playful manner, ran to the piano-forte; performing, note for note, all the music from "Freischütz," which, three or four days previously, he had heard me play; and asking, "How do you like this chorus? what do you think of this air?" and so on. Then, forgetting quartets and Weber, down we went into the garden; he clearing high hedges with a leap, running, singing, or climbing up the trees like a squirrel, — the very image of health and happiness.

When scarcely twenty years old, he had composed his octet, three quartets for piano and stringed instruments, two sonatas, two symphonies, his first violin-quartet, various operas, a great number of separate Lieder or songs, and the immortal overture to "A Midsummer Night's Dream." On the 20th of April, he arrived in London, where he was first welcomed by him whom I may call his life-long friend, Moscheles. Shortly afterwards, he conducted, at the Philharmonic Concert, his own first symphony, as well as his overture to "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

The effect of the first performance of this overture in London was electrical. All at once, and perhaps when least expected, the great gap left by the death of Beethoven seemed likely to be filled up. His renown, after the enthusiastic but just reports of his reception in London, both as a composer and pianist, spread like wildfire all over Europe, and gave the young and ardent *maestro* a new stimulus to proceed on his glorious path.

During a brilliant season in London, he became acquainted with the two vocal stars, Sontag and Malibran, and, moreover, gained the esteem and affection of men eminent in his profession, such as Attwood, the worthy pupil of Mozart, and Horsley, the distinguished theorist, whose friendship Mendelssohn ever valued most highly In the beginning of August, he made an extensive tour in Scotland, with the friend already alluded to, Carl Klingemann; drawing, composing, and feeding his fancy amid its romantic scenery. They went first to Edinburgh; then to Perth, Blair, Athol, Loch Tay, to the Island of Staffa, and Fingal's Cave; then southwards, by Glasgow and Loch Lomond, visiting the Cumberland Lakes and Liverpool, — a journey fraught with valuable influences on a cultivated and poetical mind like Mendelssohn's. The splendid overture to "Fingal's Cave" (*Hebriden*) was the only immediate result of these impressions; but even the greatest of his in-

strumental works, the "Symphony in A Minor," though not completed until *fourteen* years later, may be said to have had its origin in the sombre inspirations of ancient Holyrood, as beheld in the still gloom of evening. On his way back from Scotland, he paid a short visit, in North Wales, to the estimable and accomplished family of Mr. and Mrs. John Taylor, where he was received in the most cordial manner, and under whose friendly roof several of his capriccios and scherzos for the pianoforte were composed.

I met Mendelssohn again, when, in the course of his Italian journey, he called upon me at Naples. My joy at seeing him was boundless. We had met in the interval under circumstances less cheering and agreeable, indeed, than when in connection with Weber: but the passing cloud had now vanished; and, as if to compensate the blank of so many lost years, he unfolded to me all the treasures of his inexhaustible genius. I then heard, for the first time, his overtures; numerous songs imbued with the impressions of fresh scenes; and, above all, one of his greatest works,—his "Walpurgis Night," full of solid grandeur, and overflowing with the rich ideas of his teeming fancy. In two instances I had the opportunity of witnessing his almost marvellous facility of retaining, as it were stereotyped in his mind, any passages of music he had heard, even if only once. At an evening party at the house of the celebrated vocalist,

Madame Fodor, several airs of Donizetti and Rossini, French romances, and an instrumental duet by Moscheles, were performed. Mendelssohn, being subsequently invited to play, without a moment's hesitation introduced first one theme of the pieces performed, then another, added a third and fourth, and worked them simultaneously in the most skilful manner. At first playfully mimicking the Italian style, and then adopting the severe forms of the old masters, he contrived to give a perfect musical form and shape to all; and thus the inspiration of the present moment seemed as though it had been the result of forethought and study.

In society, apart from musical subjects, nothing could be more entertaining or animated than Mendelssohn's conversation on literary topics. The works of Shakspeare and other eminent British poets were quite as familiar to him as those of his own country; and, although his accent was slightly tinctured by his German origin, he spoke as well as wrote the English language with great facility and purity. He drew from nature, and painted also very well; and, indeed, might be said to possess every social accomplishment.

In April, 1832, he arrived again in London. Here he produced, and played at the Philharmonic Concert, his "G-minor Concerto," which made an extraordinary impression: so much so, that he was obliged to repeat it at the following concert of the same society, — an

occurrence without precedent. And here it may be mentioned, that, considered as a piano-forte player, the complete mastery he possessed over all mechanical difficulties, joined to the spirit, delicacy, and certainty of his execution, left him confessedly without a rival.

But, over and above all evidences of his creative genius, he displayed, at an organ performance at St. Paul's Cathedral, quite as transcendent a talent for that branch of executive skill, as he had done, at the Philharmonic, on the piano-forte. Whether in working up one of Bach's mighty pedal fugues, or in extempore display of his own, he equally astonished and delighted an audience comprising many of the most eminent professors and critics of the metropolis.*

Mendelssohn was the inventor of an original and interesting class of short piano-forte pieces, most appropriately called "Songs without Words." At that period, mechanical dexterity, musical claptraps, skips from one part of the piano to another, endless shakes and arpeggios, were the order of the day: every thing

* It was humorously said, at the time, that Mendelssohn could do every thing but one on the organ: one thing he could not do,—play the audience out of church. The more he attempted it, the less they were inclined to go: the more gracefully insinuating his musical hints, the more delightedly patient they became to remain. It is said that once, when playing at St. Paul's, the vergers, wearied with endeavoring to persuade the people to retire, resorted, at length, to the more convincing argument of beating them over the head, and at last cleared the cathedral. — *Am. Ed.*

was sacrificed to display. Passages were written for the sole purpose of puzzling and perplexing the musical dilettanti, causing amazement by the immense quantity of notes compressed into one page. Mendelssohn, who would never sacrifice to the prevailing taste, took, in this new species of composition, quite an independent flight: his aim was to restore the ill-treated, panting piano-forte to its dignity and rank; and, in this view, he gave to the world those exquisite little musical poems I have mentioned. Though limited in extent, and unequal, in point of merit, the hand of the master is perceptible in every one; and long hence, when even the trace of the thundering piano-forte school shall have disappeared, the musician and amateur will recur with delight to these charming fruits of a refined and elevated taste. It must not be inferred from this, that Mendelssohn's piano-forte works are wholly free from mechanical difficulties. On the contrary, they abound in brilliant passages and dispersions of chords, that, from their very novelty, present no mean obstacle even to expert performers; but Mendelssohn never writes difficulties for the mere sake of display.

It would be a matter of difficulty to decide in what quality Mendelssohn excelled the most, — whether as composer, pianist, organist, or conductor of an orchestra. Nobody, certainly, ever knew better how to communicate — as if by an electric fluid — his own conception

of a work to a large body of performers. It was highly interesting, on such an occasion, to contemplate the anxious attention manifested by a body of sometimes more than five hundred singers and performers, watching every glance of Mendelssohn's eye, and following, like obedient spirits, the magic wand of this musical Prospero. Once, while conducting a rehearsal of Beethoven's "Eighth Symphony," the admirable allegretto in B flat not going at first to his liking, he remarked, smilingly, that "he knew every one of the gentlemen engaged was capable of performing, and even of composing, a scherzo of his own; but that *just now* he wanted to hear Beethoven's, which he thought had some merits." It was cheerfully repeated. "Beautiful, charming!" cried Mendelssohn, "but still too loud in two or three instances. Let us take it again, from the middle."—"No, no," was the general reply of the band: "the whole piece over again, for our own satisfaction;" and then they played it with the utmost delicacy and finish, Mendelssohn laying aside his *bâton*, and listening with evident delight to the more perfect execution. "What would I have given," he exclaimed, "if Beethoven could have heard his own composition so well understood, and so magnificently performed!"

It is perhaps not generally known, that Mendelssohn spent some of his happiest hours in the neighborhood of London. At his fifth visit to the great metropolis

he was accompanied by his wife, who had never before seen England; and they resided at the house of one of her relations, Mrs. Benecke, on Denmark-hill. Here Mendelssohn led a quiet and almost secluded life, receiving few visitors, and only going to town when called thither by his professional duties at the Philharmonic Concerts; two of which were directed by him.

On one fine morning, a party had been arranged by his amiable host to spend the day at Windsor. Every thing was prepared, — the carriages were at the door, and the word for starting had been given, — when Mendelssohn found suddenly some pretext for not joining the party, and remained at home with the children, with whom he was a universal favorite. When his friends returned from Windsor, he played to them a sparkling and delicious melody, the offspring of that day, subsequently introduced in the fifth book of his "Songs without Words;" and which, among the most generally played and admired, is perhaps the preferred of all.

My reminiscences of him in England date next at the performance of "Elijah," which took place, for the first time, at Birmingham, Aug. 26th, 1846.

The noble Town Hall was crowded, at an early hour of that forenoon, with a brilliant and eagerly expectant audience. It was an anxious and solemn moment. Every eye had long been directed towards the conductor's desk, when, at half-past eleven o'clock, a deafening

shout from the band and chorus announced the approach of the great composer. The reception he met with, on stepping into his place, from the assembled thousands, was absolutely overwhelming; whilst the sun, emerging at that moment, seemed to illumine the vast edifice in honor of the bright and pure being who stood there, the idol of all beholders! Even now I hardly dare trust myself with the recollection, that, within one short year from that day, the light of those brilliant expressive eyes was fated to be dimmed, and that the treasures of that exalted, fruitful, and imaginative mind would be lost to us for evermore.

The first performance of "Elijah," at Exeter Hall, took place on Friday, the 16th of April, 1847, and was received with prodigious applause. On the following Friday, Her Majesty and Prince Albert paid their first visit to the Sacred Harmonic Society, on the occasion of its second performance. What they felt on that evening is best described by Prince Albert himself, who, on the morning of the 24th of April, sent to Mendelssohn the book of the oratorio which he had used to follow the performance; on the first page of which was the following inscription, in German, in the Prince's own handwriting:—

"To the noble artist, who, surrounded by the Baal-worship of corrupted art, has been able, by his genius and science, to preserve faithfully, like another Elijah, the worship of true art,

and once more to accustom our ear, lost in the whirl of an empty play of sounds, to the pure notes of expressive composition and legitimate harmony, — to the great master, who makes us conscious of the unity of his conception, through the whole maze of his creation, from the soft whispering to the mighty raging of the elements! Written in token of grateful remembrance, by Albert.

"BUCKINGHAM PALACE, April 24, 1847."

The death of Mendelssohn, which shortly followed, was felt as a general calamity. One whose life was throughout pure and spotless, and whose rare faculties were entirely devoted to the highest ends of art, was taken from us in the meridian of life, when, according to the ordinary chances of mortality, scarcely more than half of his glorious career had been accomplished! The space left by such a man can never, perhaps, be filled up. Of frank and cordial temper, impatient of deceit or intrigue, indulgent and encouraging to others in whom he discerned talent and worth, he was neither elated by extravagant adulation, nor disheartened under envious and unjust criticisms. His one absorbing aspiration through life was the promotion of his divine art. His unaffected and cheerful manner was joined with an unswerving integrity of mind and purpose.

The fame of this illustrious musician may and probably will reach into future ages; but a knowledge of the qualities which distinguished him as a man can never be adequately communicated to posterity. Those only

who possessed the blessed privilege of calling him their friend can either know or feel *how* much of virtue, genius, and charm of character, was extinguished in the person of that miracle of humanity, Felix Mendelssohn

FIVE SKETCHES BY HENRY F. CHORLEY

I.

MENDELSSOHN AS THE DIRECTOR OF A NORTH GERMAN MUSICAL FESTIVAL.

I WAS lying in the sunshine, after the one-o'clock *table d'hôte*, feverish and sleepy, lazily calling up past festivals and distant faces, when the thread of my musings was cut short by the entrance of a clean, civil little boy, with a message from Dr. Mendelssohn, who was then in the Egydien Church, superintending the rehearsal. We were there ere I was well awake. The church is but the fragment of a large Gothic building, which has been sorely despoiled of much of its old ornaments by time or violence; and its one good point, height, renders it ineligible for musical purposes. Even then, though it was late in the afternoon, and the rehearsal had been going on with small intermission since the morning, it was three parts full. I arrived in the midst of Beethoven's "C-minor Symphony," just a few bars before the commencement of its glorious final March. Had I desired a moment of the strongest possible sensation on first making acquaintance with a

German orchestra, it could not have been more completely granted.

The performance fell far short of what it would have been by Dr. Mendelssohn's own band at Leipzig. At these German musical festivals, as was formerly the case at our English ones, the orchestra is compounded of unequal materials; being assisted by many persons unused to practise together. Here, too, it was largely amateur; but the effect of the music, nevertheless, was overcoming. The glory of the symphony was heightened by the lofty arches and long-drawn aisles through which it resounded; and there was that thrill, and the mustering of blood to the heart, which so few things excite when early youth is past.

Yet, in the performance of Beethoven's symphony, the orchestra was hardly as exact as it might have been; but the earnestness and anxiety of its members, who betook themselves to their tasks, — one heedless, if he seesawed over his violoncello as oddly as Dr. Johnson; another, if he rasped the very hair off his head; a third, if, like the bassoon-player in "Bracebridge Hall," he "blew his face to a point," — made a sight at once new, and, though amusing, calculated to disarm ridicule. Indeed, that sense of the whimsical and grotesque, which is so invaluable as a travelling companion to solitary persons, becomes far less sardonic in Germany than elsewhere. Every eye was fixed fast upon

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the conductor, with a submissiveness and an admiration which must have had their reciprocal effect in inspiring him to go through his fatiguing duties without flagging or impatience; and Dr. Mendelssohn's conducting at rehearsal, though easy in appearance, and therefore any thing but distracting to the eye, was the strictest in spirit of any that I had then witnessed.

After the symphony, a weak and tame contralto singer, with a profusion of fair ringlets, went through the delicious arioso in "St. Paul," — "But the Lord is mindful of his own;" and then the conductor, hitherto a personal stranger, came down to me, and gave me a friendly welcome to Germany.

It is sad now to recall the inquiries after mutual friends, the quick interchange of a musical piece of news or two, and the unexpected joke (for a joke there was, I remember), which began an acquaintance soon to be ripened into indulgent friendship on the one side, and faithful regard on the other. There was this inexpressible comfort in all intercourse with Mendelssohn, — that he made no secret of his likings and dislikings. Few men so distinguished have been so simple, so cordial, so considerate; but few have been so innocent of courtiership, positive or negative. One might be sure that a welcome from him was a welcome indeed.

I thought then, as I do now, his face one of the most beautiful which has ever been seen. No portrait extant

does it justice. A Titian would have generalized, and, out of its many expressions, made up one, which, in some sort, should reflect the many characteristics and humors of the poet, — his earnest seriousness, his childlike truthfulness, his clear, cultivated intellect, his impulsive vivacity. The German painters could only invest a theatrical, thoughtful-looking man with that serious cloak which plays so important a part on the stage, and in the portraits of their country, and conceive the task accomplished when it was not so much as begun. None of them has perpetuated the face with which Mendelssohn listened to the music in which he delighted, or the face with which he would crave to be told again some merry story, though he knew it already by heart. I felt in that first half-hour, that in him there was no stilted sentiment, no affected heartiness; that he was no sayer of deep things, no searcher for witty ones; but one of a pure, sincere intelligence, bright, eager, and happy, even when most imaginative. Perhaps there was no contemporary at once strong, simple, and subtle enough, to paint such a man with such a countenance.

The rehearsal proceeded. A Psalm by Schneider was gone through, the "Hallelujah Chorus" from the "Messiah," and Weber's "Jubilee Overture," all practised with care and intelligence, not rattled over as a task. The audience remained attentive and numerous till th.

last chord, and then dispersed in happy anticipation of the morrow; Dr. Mendelssohn, to be serenaded by the young men of the town with some of the part-songs, which make up so peculiar a feature in German vocal music.

By six o'clock, A.M., on the first morning of the festival, there was no possibility of sleeping in Brunswick. Not only was the entire Blue Angel stirring and clamorous for its breakfast: the whole town was blithely alive. In every room of the opposite four-story house, which seemed nodding into my little light chamber, the work of adorning was busily going on, — in one window, the first flourish of the razor; in another, the last shoulder-knot pinned on, or the sash tied. But neither gentlemen nor ladies denied themselves the pleasure of throwing wide the casements, and leaning out into the fresh autumnal sunshine, so often as the frequent sound of creaking springs and jingling wheels, the leisurely trot of horses, or the eager brawling of their drivers, announced that another cargo of pleasurers was coming in to enjoy the execution of Mendelssohn's "St. Paul."

By nine, every one was streaming towards the Egydien Church, which, even at that hour, was three parts full. A gayly varying sight was the audience. Elegantly dressed girls, in the transparent and gay toilettes of an English ball-room, might be seen sitting side by side with the gypsy-colored, hard-handed peasant

women of the district, in their black caps gracefully displaying the head, and picturesquely decorated with pendent streamers of ribbon. Here, again, was a comely youth tight-laced in his neat uniform, and every hair of his mustache trimmed and trained to an agony of perfection, squeezed up against a dirty, savage, half-naked student, with his long, wild hair half-way down his back, and his velveteen coat confined at the waist with one solitary button, letting it be clearly seen that neither shirt nor waistcoat was underneath. The orchestra, on the other hand, had an effective appearance of uniformity. The lady-singers, though all serving gratuitously, both amateurs and theatrical artists, had wisely agreed to merge all individual fancies in an inexpensive, but delicate and pretty uniform of white, with large nosegay by way of ornament. The whole assembly of orchestra and audience, thus heterogeneously composed, was cemented by one sympathetic desire to honor a great musician. All eyes awaited Mendelssohn's (not the Duke of Brunswick's) coming. His conductor's desk was wreathed with a fresh garland of flowers. Upon it, beside the score of his oratorio, was laid another more delicate bouquet, and for his refreshment, a paper, if I mistake not, of those dainties in which every good German housewife is so skilful.

Precisely at ten o'clock, the performance began. I had heard the oratorio of "St. Paul" two or three times

before, but had never thoroughly enjoyed it till then. There was much, of course, in time, place, and sympathy; but, allowing for these influences as largely as may be required, there is little modern music which gains so much with every subsequent hearing as that of the "St. Paul." How forcible in their simple truth are the effects! How thrillingly expressed by the multiplication of treble voices and wind-instruments is the celestial apparition in the scene of Saul's conversion! How ferociously real are the cries of the multitude at the stoning of St. Stephen! How melodious, in its sweet holiness of consolation, is the funeral chorus, "Oh, happy and blest are they," when the proto-martyr is laid in his grave!

In adverting to some of the claims of "St. Paul" on the future, the scope it gives to the principal singers must not be forgotten. Though it affords less opportunity for separate display than most of Handel's oratorios, it still contains a song of the very highest order for each voice of the vocal quartet, — for the soprano, the air "Jerusalem;" for the contralto, that delicious arioso, "But the Lord is mindful of his own;" for the bass, the scena, "O God, have mercy upon me!" and for the tenor, the cantabile, "Be thou faithful unto death!" than which Handel himself has hardly left us a tenor air deeper or more earnest in its expressiveness. Every song, moreover, is not only tempting to declaim, but

agreeable to sing. From the date of the composition of this oratorio till the last hour of his life, Mendelssohn was increasingly anxious to produce effect by the ease, beauty, and practicability of his vocal writing. The above four songs were the work of happy hours; and their success may have contributed to that mellowing of his style, and simplification of his manner, which may be traced through the works of his short life.

In some respects, the performance of "St. Paul" must have satisfied its author. The chorus was extremely good, clear in the delivery of its tone, and its precision to be inferred from the tremendous sibilation on certain words, — to an amount of sssss-sforzando, — rarely, in 1839, to be remarked at home, even in the performance of the choruses, "For unto *us* a child is born," or "From the censer," both favorites with us, both full of the dangerous sound. The absence of an organ to support and blend the voices was a great loss. In the fugue at the opening of the second part, and in most of the choruses, this was sadly felt. It is one of the few English indispensables which the Germans would do well to naturalize, and for the want of which, in grand sacred music, not even the superiority of their orchestras, nor the heartiness of zeal, such as characterized every chord of the Brunswick chorus, can altogether satisfactorily compensate. The solo exhibitions were, as usual, the least admirable part of the performance; yet I was told by

Mendelssohn that the great songs of the "St. Paul" had not hitherto been better executed in Germany.

I was sitting, on the second morning, rejoicing in the rationality of a few hours' pause, when Dr. Mendelssohn kindly paid me a visit. There were some manuscripts of Sebastian Bach to be inspected. There was to be organ-playing in the cathedral. In short, it was to be one of those mornings of musical lounging and luxury, which, as regards real enjoyment of, and insight into, the art, are sometimes worth a score of formal performances. Once again, the friendly hospitality must be dwelt on, which included in these choice pleasures a total stranger, without his being allowed for a single instant to feel himself tolerated or *de trop*.

The Bach manuscripts did not turn out any thing very extraordinary. It was interesting to hear Mendelssohn pronouncing on their authenticity with the certainty of a Beckford, when examining a Cellini carving or a jewel; though, for such a thorough-going intimacy, one might have been prepared by the spirit which runs through the younger composer's harmonies, especially in his later works, and by the circumstance of his being one of the finest organ-players of his time.

The interior of the cathedral in Brunswick is striking, — striking from its antiquity, and the air of bleak, naked cheerlessness, which, if the unpleasant truth be

told, hardly ever fails to follow the steps of Lutheranism, when possessing itself of a Catholic building. The organ-case, though dolefully worm-eaten, and spoiled with white paint, is a fine piece of carving. The instrument was sadly out of order; but Mendelssohn made it speak most gloriously, winding up nearly an hour's magnificent playing by one of Bach's grand fugues. But the thing which comes most vividly before me, in recalling that morning, is the expression of love and dutiful reverence on the faces of half a dozen urchins, who awaited the composer, cap in hand, at the foot of the gallery-stairs. Nothing analogous to it is found in English admiration or French enthusiasm.

Brunswick dined in the interval between the organ-playing and the commencement, at two o'clock, of the second day's performance, in the church. This last would hardly be accepted as sacred, according to the English acceptation of the word; for the programme ran thus:—

FIRST PART.

Jubilee Overture	Weber.
Adagio (Violin)	Spohr.
Psalm	Schneider.

SECOND PART.

Concerto (Clarionet)	Klein.
Symphony (C-minor)	Beethoven.
Hallelujah Chorus	Handel.

The Egydien Church, as before, was crowded. The orchestra and chorus, as before, were sedulous and energetic. When the symphony of Beethoven was over, a *feu de joie* of splendid bouquets, carefully hidden till then, was discharged upon the conductor by the ladies. But the climax of enthusiasm was yet to come. This was reserved for the ball in the evening.

The scene of this festive ceremony, which ended with the apotheosis of Mendelssohn, was the theatre, which had been gayly decorated for the occasion, though not sufficiently lighted. A suite of rooms had been temporarily added for supper. At the furthest depth of the stage, a stately pavilion, draperied with white, had been erected. This was at first concealed by the curtain, which was kept down till the right moment, — the arrival of the composer.* When he entered the theatre, according to preconcerted signal, he was met by two young girls, who led him gently forward, the curtain slowly rising, to this shrine of honor: six other young ladies, dressed as genii, there awaited him; and, after a brief address from one of them, a laurel-crown was placed on his head.

The last entertainment of the Brunswick Festival was Dr. Mendelssohn's morning concert, given in the

* The reader of "Charles Auchester" will recall the vivid passage in that book, which only amplifies in luxuriant detail the outline of this.

saloon where the public dinner had been held. The programme was excellent alike for its selection and its brevity.

FIRST PART.

Overture.	
Air, "Il mio tesoro"	Mozart.
Concerto for piano (D-minor) . . .	Mendelssohn.

SECOND PART.

Violin-Concerto	Molique.
Serenade (Piano and Orchestra) .	Mendelssohn.
Symphony (A-major)	Beethoven.

The piano-forte playing was of course the chief treat. It is rarely that I have been so delighted, without novelty or surprise having some share in the delight. It would have been absurd to expect much *pianism*, as distinct from music, in the performance of one writing so straightforwardly, and without the coquetries of embroidery, as Mendelssohn. Accordingly, his performance had none of the exquisite *finesses* of Moscheles, on the score of which it has been elsewhere said that "there is wit in his playing;" none of the delicate and plaintive and spiritual seductions of Chopin, who swept the keys with so insinuating and gossamer a touch, that the crudest and most chromatic harmonies of his music floated away under his hand, indistinct, yet not unpleasing, like the wild and softened discords of the Æolian harp; none of the brilliant extravagances of Liszt, by

which he illuminates every composition he undertakes with a living but lightening fire, and imparts to it a soul of passion, or a dazzling vivacity, the interpretation never contradicting the author's intention, but more poignant, more intense, more glowing, than ever the author dreamed of. And yet no one that ever heard Mendelssohn's piano-forte playing could find it dry, could fail to be excited and fascinated by it, despite of its want of all the caprices and colorings of his contemporaries. Solidity, in which the organ-touch is given to the piano without the organ ponderosity; spirit (witness his execution to the finale of the "D-minor Concerto") animating, but never intoxicating, the ear; expression, which, making every tone sink deep, required not the garnishing of trills and appoggiature, or the aid of changes of time, — were among its outward and salient characteristics. Within and beyond all these, though hard to be conveyed in words, there was to be felt a mind clear and deep; an appreciation of character and form referring to the inner spirit rather than the outward details; the same which gives so exquisitely Southern a character to barcarolle and gondola tune in the composer's "Songs without Words," and its fresh, Ossianic, sea-wildness to his overture to the "Hebrides;" the same which enabled him, when a little boy, in the happiest piece of descriptive music of our time, to illustrate Shakspeare's exquisite fairy-scenes neither feebly nc

unworthily. Demanding as it does execution without grimace; fancy, cheerful and excursive, but never morbid; and feeling, under the control of a serene, not sluggish spirit, — Mendelssohn's is eminently manly music, and loses effect beyond that of almost any other of his contemporaries, when attempted by female hands.

The concerto and the serenade were too soon over, — things to be regretted as not lasting longer, for the sake of the manner in which they were performed, and because they were almost the last music of the evening. The applause which attended them was what might have been expected, what was deserved. Then came the beautiful symphony by Beethoven, which was hardly relished according to its merits; for who can settle himself to enjoy a last pleasure? then drove up the primitive equipages, and the remarkable charioteers I had watched arrive in such a different mood but three days before; and the glory of the "celebrity," as Dr. Burney primly called the Handel Commemoration in Westminster Abbey, was over!

II.

MENDELSSOHN'S SISTER AND MOTHER.

THE amateurs in Berlin are all little *maestri:* they dabble in composition, have most of them the score of a mass, sinfonia, or overture, locked up in their desks; the consciousness of which helps to sweeten their lives, and gives them the smiling satisfaction which Mr. Bickerstaff discovered in the girl who embroidered his garters." Thus writes a cynical critic; but I found traces of taste and knowledge everywhere, and *know* that they possessed one amateur *pianiste* and composer of no ordinary force and feeling. I allude to Madame Hensel, the sister of Mendelssohn, whose sudden death (in the midst of her music) gave to her brother's overwrought nerves and wasted frame the shock from which he never recovered, — which, indeed, hastened his own decease. This cherished sister, Fanny, had been the companion of the great musician's pursuits, during the years of childhood, in the days when they used to take five-minute lessons together, and in later days also, when (as I have heard him tell) they vied with each other which could best execute a certain difficult left-hand passage in Kalkbrenner's "Effusio Musica." Had Madame Hensel been a poor man's daughter, she must have become known to the world by the side of Madame

Schumann and Madame Pleyel, as a female pianist of the very highest class. Like her brother, she had in her composition a touch of that southern vivacity which is so rare among the Germans. More feminine than his, her playing bore a strong family resemblance to her brother's in its fire, neatness, and solidity. Like himself, too, she was as generally accomplished as she was specially gifted.

Now that all are gone, when I am speaking of that most delightful artistic musical circle of Berlin, — the one she adorned and animated, — it is fitting, and not indelicate, to speak, too, of the head of the family house, to whom Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn owed so much of all that made them charming, — the excellent and accomplished mother of the composer. There have lived few women more honorably distinguished than she was by acquirement; by that perfect propriety, which Horace Walpole has justly called the grace of declining life; by a cordial hospitality, the sincerity of which there was no mistaking; by an easy humor in conversation, a knowledge of men and books, and a lively interest in the younger generation, which, at her age, is only found in the brightest and best of their species. It is true that she had no common motive for keeping pace with the world of Europe, in the fame of her son, and in the brilliant succession of guests whom her daughter assembled; but, apart from this, she possessed a fund

of intelligence, a habit of mind bred amidst constant intercourse with the best things and persons of all countries, which belonged to herself, and remained with her to the last. With such a mother, and such a brother, it was hardly likely that one like Madame Hensel should bury her talents in a napkin, or let them waste. Her morning music will be spoken of and recollected with cordial regret by all who retrace the story of the art, in Berlin, during the first half of this century.

I shall never think of the life-size oil-sketches taken from life in Rome, which, in 1840, adorned the studio of Professor Hensel, without recalling the running accompaniment (as it were) of the graceful and solid compositions in which his wife also called up her characteristic remembrances of her Italian journey. And the delight with which she spoke of her brother, and the cordiality with which she welcomed his friends from England, are as vividly present to me now, when I write, as if I had only an instant since seen her bright face (the "Miriam" of her husband's picture); had only just heard the pleasant, racy English, "You will excuse my poor little music of my own," with which she opened her piano. It will be long before Berlin, or any other capital, can show a musical circle more delightfully composed, or animated by brighter presiding spirits, than that of Madame Hensel.

III.

MENDELSSOHN'S INVITATION TO BERLIN.

MENDELSSOHN was not wholly a stranger to the stage of the Prussian capital. To the production there and withdrawal thence of one of his early operas, "Camacho's Wedding," he never referred willingly. Both the work and its composer were, probably, heartlessly treated in his own town. But though posterity may some day fall back on the opera with that toleration bred among its writer's later successes, which will invest every line from his pen with a certain charm, no one can pretend that the opera *per se* deserved to live. It is among the few published compositions by its writer to which the epithet "crude" may be applied. The pedantry in it oppresses the fancy. There is a taste of Berlin pretension in the music, which may be the reason why the prophet did not find honor at home.

Be it good or bad, however, the fate of "Camacho's Wedding" contributed to keep Mendelssohn from the stage. By the four theatrical works which he produced (as has been just said) "on command," as much as by the fragment of "Lorelei," which was his swan song, we may divine the extent of our loss in his silence. Who will not regret, that, in place of the

Court Commissions, Mendelssohn's royal patron did not order a simple, honest, entire opera? The circumstance of his having to write for the delectation of princes, courtiers, professors, and men of letters, in no respect exempted the composer from the annoyances and postponements which seem inevitably to belong to the production of theatrical music. He had to fight with pedantic fopperies or inane criticisms in the production of his music to Shakspeare's fairy play, and with caprices no less teasing in the delayed execution of his "Athalie" music. "Antigone" seemed to come out under a brighter star; and he always referred to its first performance as to one of the good days of which (God be thanked!) his life had so many. But, under the best of circumstances, these works are, by their nature, rarely accessible; appealing only to a peculiar and limited public; liable, when produced, to misconstruction and failure of effect, in no respect ascribable to their musical qualities, and thus they can hardly be esteemed as important gifts to the musical stage of Germany.

IV.

MENDELSSOHN AS A COMPOSER.

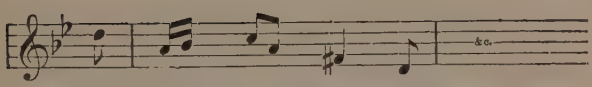
It will be thought by many that the present is too early a period for pronouncing a fair judgment on Mendelssohn as a composer, or for venturing to point out the place he is destined to hold in the history of German music. Immediate survivors are, and should be, at the mercy of their sympathies. That which is the newest enjoys, in its very novelty, a temporary advantage, which must be allowed for as a flattering, if not a false light. There are many reasons, furnished by both theory and precedent, for waiting. On the other hand, the temptation to speak is great in the present case; seeing that a section of musicians is already professing to take leave of Mendelssohn, as one who has closed a great period; and, after whom, no more great works shall be produced, save by an utter re-arrangement of every known form, principle, and material of music. The art, they say, when fully ripe, must begin to rot, or else be born entirely anew.

But this mechanical speculation and systematizing cannot be admitted to dispose of the future prospects of German music. Let a few examples be offered to these dealers of doom and discouragement. Have matters hitherto proceeded with this chronological regu-

larity, — this regular going up the ladder and down again? Does the recognized supremacy of Beethoven's great symphonies close the ear to Weber's overtures? Or, to take a yet more extreme instance: there is no part of a concert, whatsoever be its ingredients, at which the odd, delicate, wayward, yet thoroughly artistic music of Chopin, if rendered in any thing like the right spirit, comes too late. For delicious, spontaneous melody, and for a Shakspearian profusion of the clearest, most beautiful, and noblest thoughts, Mendelssohn cannot be rated as the equal of either Mozart or of Beethoven. All three were masters of musical science and orchestral combination; yet the symphonies, overtures, and quartets of Mendelssohn can be played after those of Beethoven without loss of effect, whereas those of Mozart cannot. Do instances like these illustrate the existence of formal and sequentially necessary preferences? Do they indicate to us a world of which the limits have been reached, and in which constructive ingenuity has been exhausted? where the public, moreover, has been rendered so fastidious by its worship of supreme genius, that it will bow to nothing less supreme? Assuredly not. Leaving this theory of degradation to those who are concerned in proving it, let us see what characteristics of Mendelssohn's genius can be assembled, without rhapsody or false enthusiasm.

The amazing musical activity of his brief career has

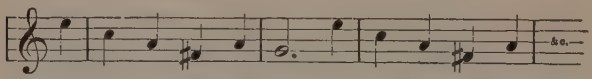
hardly yet been sufficiently considered. It was not maintained at the sacrifice of every other faculty and pursuit. To use a phrase applied by himself to another: "Not only did he love to give pleasure, but he would have some for himself too." He could manage to read and to think, and to make himself the delight of the choicest and most intellectual society, wherever he went; he kept up his taste for painting, and for looking at pictures; he was devoted in all his domestic relations; his time was wasted by the importunities of coarse and self-interested people, from whose assaults there was no possibility of entirely escaping. He did the work of a strong and busy man, for some years, as merely conductor of concerts and festivals in Germany and in England; and yet the list of complete works produced by him, and sanctioned as such, is, its bulk considered, among the longest lists by the great composers that could be cited. The mass of unpublished manuscript, too, that will never see the light, is known, by the thematic catalogue of his works left behind him, to be still very large. And with him there was no slovenliness, no taking for granted, no gross and blurred manuscript, no hurried pages, no flagrant platitudes thrust in to do emergency work. His music was the best that he could make; and its high finish is only equalled by its evenness of quality. He was always willing to retouch a new composition, without that irri-

table finicality, which, enamoured of retouching, ends by depriving the work of all nature and proportion. It is well known that the "Elijah" was largely altered after its first performance. The "Walpurgis Night" lay unfinished for many years: so, I believe, did the third symphony, in A minor; and the symphony in A major was withheld from the press during its composer's lifetime, because he expressed his intention of remodelling the first movement. He was as conscientious and exact as he was quick. I can hardly name one bar of slighted music which bears his signature. Some hard and dry, and, as he called them, "rebellious" compositions were put forth in his young days; but they were knotted up, as it were, with close care and pains, not dashed off with insolence. They were the works of a boy anxious to prove himself a man among the double-refined intelligences of those by whom he was surrounded; and parading his science, his knowledge of the ancients, his mastery over all the learning of his art. Year by year, less aridity, more grace, flexibility, and versatility, marked the thinking and writing of Mendelssohn. There is the distance of a long life betwixt his early stringed quartet in A minor, with the Lied prefixed, and his last quintet in B flat, with its adagio (of all modern movements the most grandiose and impassioned) and its scherzo on a theme —

as quaintly national as some old English "fancy," danced under the mistletoe at Christmas-time, or on the green at May Day.

That Mendelssohn possessed a natural vein of such flowing melody as Mozart and Beethoven commanded, cannot be claimed for him. Yet, as a melodist, he has been misunderstood and undervalued in no common degree; the fate, by the way, of every new composer who is more than a melodist. Those who have passed hasty judgment on him as "dry" have done so rather on the strength of some one work which does not suit their humor, than on the bulk of his writings. Further, to every man's definition of melody, there goes more of temperament, association, and extraneous sympathy than professors or amateurs will willingly admit. To those who have estimated Mendelssohn as poor in melody, let me recall, from his instrumental works alone, such themes as the slow movement of his first piano-forte concerto, the slow movement to his symphony in A major, the theme of his overture "Melusina," the minuet of his quartet in D major, the theme of the andante to his first sonata with violoncello, — all the subjects of the several movements of his violin-concerto, — the notturno in his "Midsummer Night's Dream" music, the scherzo in his "A-minor Symphony." If

the list be not lengthened, it is from no want of example.

Or is variety brought forward as an indispensable requisite for the genius who is to rank among those of the first class? Here, again, I think Mendelssohn will be found to stand the test: in fact, the admirable propriety of his productions proves versatility as the attribute of one who wrote for every conceivable purpose, if not in every style. Who, for instance, that heard his "Ave Maria," or his "Lauda Sion," could fancy either a Protestant hymn? Who that listened to his treatment of the choral in the "Hymn of Praise," could imagine that noble movement belonging to a Catholic service of praise? The choruses to Racine's "Athalie," and to the translation of "Œdipus," are, in some respects, written under the same conditions. Yet the former is at once as French and Israelitish as the latter is German and Greek. There is not in Mehul — no, not even in Auber — a touch of melody more perfectly Gallic in its humor than this subject in the introductory chorus to "Athalie,"—



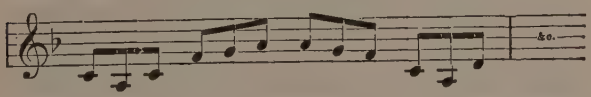
Yet how old-world and Jewish is the leading phrase of the overture, with its antiphonic repetition, in another key; while the wail on the passage to the English words,

"O David's regal home!"

is a true strain from the harp, that, being hung on the willows of Babylon, could not give forth "the Lord's song in a strange land."

What the music of the Greeks was, we can less dream or divine. Its rules bore, so far as we can gather, no such relation to our present canons of musical beauty, as did the rules of their sculpture and architecture to those of the moderns. But do not a symmetrical beauty, a sensual grandeur, a spiritual glory, akin to those of the Ilissus, breathe through that delicious chorus in the "Œdipus,"—

"Thou comest here to the land, O friend!"

so flowing, so grave, so enticing, and withal so voluptuous? I know of nothing in choral music more sonorous in tone, more temperately rich in accompaniment, moving more gradually with a sonorous and stately crescendo, than the close of that movement. There not merely is the mellow fulness of the tenor instruments admirable, but the form of triplets in the accompaniment to the passage which sings the praise of the "mighty God Poseidon" is new; and, by the flux and reflux of the figure,—

indicates, as closely and poetically as art can indicate, "the swell of Summer's ocean."

What Beethoven was to the rivulet, in his "Pastoral Symphony," Mendelssohn is to the great ocean, in the close of this admirable Greek chorus, and in the immense opening of his "Meeresstille" overture: the former a sea-picture in music, which may be paired off with the "Quos Ego" of Rubens, or the notable "Triumph of Galatea;" the latter, a piece of calm as limitless, as deep, as sublime, as any spread forth on his canvas by the great Van der Velde. The above, be it lastly observed, are from the same fountain of inspiration as could turn into a volcano, flinging out fierce and stormy fire, when the subject was a Pagan revel, as the "First Walpurgis Night;" or, with a wish, could change like a dream into showers of dew amid the moonlight, — bearing the delicate and freakish burden of a "roundel and a faëry song" to the most exquisite faëry poetry in the world, — that of Shakspeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream."

I could continue these illustrations of variety, from the single and concerted songs of Mendelssohn, to a great length. In his instrumental music, I could point to the novelty of form given by him to the scherzo, to his having originated the "Songs without Words," were further examples needed. It is true that favorite chords, intervals, closes, and phrases recur again in his music; that he had a shy way of his own of returning to his first subjects, as if the humor was to perplex, not to sat-

isfy, the ear; a plainness, amounting to meagreness, in the setting of his instrumental melodies, arising from the most Spartan resolution to avoid meretriciousness of garniture; and that these things establish a manner, — a manner at once tempting and not hard to imitate. But from some such manner no musical composer is free, save Beethoven; who may be said, with a pardonable stretch of language, to be only recognizable by his resembling no one, not even himself.

Once more, as regards devotional elevation of tone, wrought out in forms of the utmost originality, we shall find Mendelssohn rising in proportion to the dignity of his subject. His sacred works are so well known that it is almost needless to offer instances from them; though there are one or two numbers (to use the technical phrase) of such rare felicity that it becomes a pleasure to recall them. Among these are the burial chorus, "Oh, happy and blest are they!" in "St. Paul;" the tenor solo, "The shadows of death," in the "Hymn of Praise;" and the entire passage from "Elijah," beginning with the persecution of the triumphant prophet by Jezebel, which conducts Elijah through the wilderness, where he is comforted by angels, and lastly is permitted to hear the "still, small voice," announcing the coming of the Most High, and to behold a vision of God enthroned among his cherubim and seraphim. It may be said, without fear of disproof, that the "Rex tremendæ"

and "Confutatis" of Mozart's "Requiem," and the loftiest portions of Beethoven's Masses, do not exceed in expression and power the four choruses, "He watching over Israel," "He that shall endure to the end," "Behold! God the Lord passed by," and "Holy, holy!"—taken as a series. With regard to such inspirations, there is neither doubt nor fear of the future. They are, as Beethoven proudly said of his own music, "safe."

Regarding Mendelssohn's skill in managing his orchestra, or his science as a writer in parts, there has never been, so far as I am aware, the slightest dispute.

Surely the above list of characteristics, then, makes up no common claim for a place among the noblest worthies of German music, for him by whom they were possessed. What further he might have achieved, had his appointed time in this world been longer, it is idle to dream. Those who knew him, knew that he could not and would not stand still; that every year of life brought with it its ripening and sweetening and deepening influences, and new power, and new pleasure, and new hope in his new fame; that he felt how much might still be done in music, and longed to try to do it. Vain was this, as are all earthly longings; and yet not wholly vain. Such very aspiration did its part in completing the life and character of one who was happy because of his gifts, and because of the love that they brought him; but happier in his honest and ceaseless

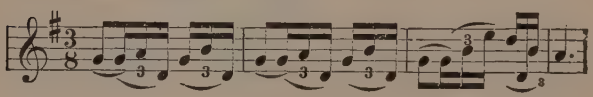
desire to brighten and purify and extend them for the service of music, and the service of his country. There may come a day, yet, when the example of Mendelssohn's life, still more than of his works, may be invoked in Germany. May this come soon, for the sake of a people who should be as great as they are gifted, and for the sake of an art which has risen to such eminence in their land!

V.

THE LAST DAYS OF MENDELSSOHN.

I PASSED the last days of August, 1847, beside Mendelssohn, at Interlachen, in Switzerland, very shortly before his return to Leipzig, and that fatal attack of illness which ended in his death there, on the 4th of November. He looked aged and sad, and stooped more than I had ever before seen him do; but his smile had never been brighter, nor his welcome more cordial. It was early in the morning of as sunny and exhilarating a day as ever shone on Switzerland that we got to Interlachen, and then and there I must see the place and its beauties. "We can talk about our business better out of the house;" and forth we went, — at first up and down under the walnut-trees, in sight of the

Jungfrau, until, by degrees, the boarding-houses began to turn out their inhabitants. Then we struck off through the wood to a height called, I think, the Hohenbühl, commanding the Lake of Thun, and the plain, with Neuhaus and Unterseen, — with the snow-mountains all around us. It was while we were climbing up to this nook that the tinkling of the cow-bells, which adds to, rather than takes from, the solitude of mountain scenery, came up from some pasture-land not far off. My companion stopped immediately, listened, smiled, and began to sing, —



from the overture to "Guillaume Tell." "How beautifully Rossini has found that!" he exclaimed. "All the introduction, too, is truly Swiss. I wish I could make some Swiss music! But the storm in his overture is very bad." And he went off again into the pastoral movement; speaking, afterwards, of Swiss scenery with a strength of affection that almost amounted to passion, — "I like the pine-trees, and the very smell of the old stones with the moss upon them." Then he told, with almost a boyish pleasure, of excursions that he had taken with his happy party of wife and children. "We will come here every year, I am resolved. How pleasant it is to sit talking on this bench, with the glori-

aus Jungfrau over there, after your Hanover square rooms in London!"

But Mendelssohn must needs be drawn back into the concert-room, even at Interlachen. A new composition for the opening of the magnificent Concert Hall in Liverpool had been proposed to him; and this was to be talked over. He had already a new cantata in view, I think for Frankfort; and mentioned some text from "Die Hermannschlacht," of Klopstock, as the subject which he had selected. "But that," he said, with his own merry laugh, "would never do for Liverpool. No: we must find something else." He spoke of Napoléon's passage of the Alps as an event he wanted to see arranged for music, — again repeating, "I must write something about this country; but that, again, will not do for England!" I mentioned Wordsworth's ode on the "Power of Sound," as a noble poem, full of pictures, from which, perhaps, portions might be detached fit for a composer's purposes; but he seemed to treat the idea of describing the various effects of music in music as too vague and hackneyed, and, moreover, objectionable, as having been done completely by Handel, in his "Alexander's Feast." Then he began to fear that he could get nothing ready by the time mentioned "for you know," he went on, "something of mine is to be sung in the Dom, at Cologne, when the nave is thrown open. That will be an opportunity! But I

shall not live to see it;" and he paused, and put his hand to his head, with a sudden expression of weariness and suffering.

He had composed much music, he said, since he had been at Interlachen; and mentioned that stupendous quartet in F minor, which we have since known as one of the most impassioned outpourings of sadness existing in instrumental music, beside some English-service music for the Protestant Church. "It has been very good for me to work," he went on, glancing for the first time at the great domestic calamity (the death of Madame Hensel) which had struck him down immediately on his return from England; "and I wanted to make something sharp and close and strict" (interlacing his fingers as he spoke): "so that church music has quite suited me. Yes: I have written a good deal since I have been here; but I must have quiet, or I shall die!"

I will not swear to the very order of words which Mendelssohn spoke; but that day is too brightly printed in my memory, for a topic or a trait or a characteristic expression to be forgotten. Life has too few such.

I may be permitted to say, that his use of English was much after the manner described. He understood and wrote our language thoroughly well: the slight touch of the foreigner in his speaking made it all the more racy. Sometimes, his epithets were most pre-

cious. I remember once his venturing his displeasure against a songstress whose behavior had offended him, by declaring that "she was like an arrogant cook."

In answer to the inquiries concerning the opera on which he was understood to be engaged, he spoke long and freely concerning the theatre, and his own plans and purposes with respect to it. "The time has come when I must try what I can do," was his language; "and, after I have written four or five operas, perhaps I shall make something good. But it is so difficult to find a subject." Then he discussed many which had been proposed to him; speaking in the strongest manner of the unauthorized use of his name which had been made in London by announcing the "Tempest," as having been commenced by him with a view to its performance at a given period. "The book is too French," he said; "and the third act is thoroughly bad. I would not have touched the opera till all that had been entirely altered. And I never would tie myself to time in such a hasty manner! No: when I have finished something, I dare say that I shall get it produced somewhere." He then went on to talk over other Shakspearian subjects; in particular the "Winter's Tale," a sketch from which had been laid before him. This seemed, in some degree, to have engaged his liking. "Something very merry," said he, "could be made with Autolycus." How merry he could have made it, the world has since learned by

the publication of his operetta, in which the knavish peddler Kauz plays so notable a part. Truer comedy does not exist in German music — not even in the most comical portions of Mozart's "Die Entführung" — than the dancing song of this precious knave, or the part taken by him in the serenade of the village girl, with its sentimental caricature of the German watchman's droning call.

"We have no one in Germany who can write opera books," Mendelssohn continued. "If Kotzebue had been alive — *he* had ideas!" and he warmed himself up as he talked, by recalling how a prosaic occasion of mere parade — the opening of the new theatre at Pesth — could inspire Kotzebue with such a characteristic invention as his "Ruins of Athens," so good for Beethoven to set. "Well, I must do my best with 'Loreley;' for Geibel has taken great trouble with the poem. We shall see." And then, again, he broke off suddenly, and put his hand to his head. "But what is the use of planning any thing? I shall not live."

Who could attend to such a foreboding in one apparently so full of energy and forecast and enterprise? I confess, that I ascribed it mainly to the impression left by the fearful trial which Mendelssohn had recently sustained in the loss of the sister to whom he was so tenderly attached. Other painful ideas seemed to rise before him. He spoke with more fear than hope of the

fermenting state of opinion in Germany, and its disastrous influences upon morals, education, good citizenship, — on all that keeps society sound, and makes home happy. He dwelt on the impatience of duty; on the sympathy shown to error and license; on the disregard of obligation; on the difficulties preparing for Germany by such perverse and preferred lawlessness among the middle class, — with tears in his eyes: for never was man of any country more sincerely, affectionately national. He spoke, too, and bitterly, of the folly and falsehood of those in high places, who had alienated the hearts which they might so easily have attached, and who had demoralized, under pretext of educating, a great people; giving illustrations, instances, anecdotes (which I need not say are sacred), with a nervous earnestness which showed how seriously and apprehensively his bright and quick mind had been at work on these subjects. Then he turned to his own future plans. I had often before heard him discuss that point in every artist's career, at which retirement from close personal intercourse with the public is desirable; but never so emphatically as that day. He was determined to give up presenting himself to the public so freely as he had done. "When one is no longer young, one should not go about playing and concert-giving;" and he expressed his strong wish, almost amounting to an intention, of settling down somewhere in the Rhine Land, — not in

any town, — there to devote himself more eagerly than ever to composition. "I shall be near England," he added, "and can come over as often as you wish; and I shall be within reach of our towns, with all these new railroads: but I must live quietly, and get rid of all that noise and interruption, if I am to live." And again was repeated the mournful presage; and the glow faded from his face, and the sad worn look came back which it pained the very heart to see.

Later in the day, I was shown, with eager pleasure, the drawings made by him at Interlachen; for he drew landscapes faithfully, if not altogether gracefully, though in color "that green" was owned by him to be a stumbling-block. I was shown, too, his piano, — "a shocking thing," as he called it; "but I am so glad that there was no decent piano in Interlachen! This will do to try a chord on when I want it; but I do not wish to make finger music." And he touched it, — the last time that I heard him touch a piano, — that I might hear what an old kettle it was!

We were bound for Freiburg, and I asked him much about Mooser's famous organ. He said that he had heard wonders concerning its *vox humana* stop. "How odd," he continued, "that such an expressive thing, which can almost talk, should be made merely of two bits of wood!" I pressed him earnestly to go on with us, and try this marvel for himself. "No," he

said, laughingly, "those organists always like no one to play but themselves. There is always some difficulty, — and then there is the noise! I must give up organ-playing; and, besides, winter is coming, and we had better draw quietly homewards." There was some talk, too, of his being obliged soon to make a professional journey to Vienna, which further limited his time. In short, never had I seen him so full of plans; and surely, never, in the annals of any art, had artist more honorably arrived at well-merited and universal fame. Vanity of vanities!

The second day of our stay at Interlachen was cloudy, with occasional torrents of rain: all the mountains were "straitly shut up." Mendelssohn spent nearly the whole day with us: indeed, I never was near him, without being reminded of what we are told of Sir Walter Scott, — that he was as lavish of good-will and time in the entertainment of his friends as if he had no other earthly thing to do. When and how he managed to write, were not easy to discover. He spoke again of Freiburg; and, for half an hour, relented, and *would* go there with us: and then, when he relapsed into his less enterprising resolution, he offered us, instead, some playing on a poor little organ that was there. He had stumbled upon a solitary village on the lake of Brienz, to which there was no proper road; he had found the church-door open, and the organ open, and nobody "to

prevent him;" and had been up there to play once or twice. The beauty and loneliness of the place, and the easy access to the instrument, had taken strong hold of his imagination. He would take us there that afternoon, and make a little music for us.

It was a gray, sullen, cold day, with passing showers, making an awning necessary for the boat; for by boat only could we get to Ringgenberg. There is something curiously secluded and quiet in the aspect of its little gray church, which stands on a knoll close to the lake, and is approached by rude steps carpeted with maiden hair and moss, and the small-leafed clinging ivy. That day, too, as before, the church-door chanced to be open, and the organ was accessible. It is the work of a Vallaisan maker, — not super-excellent in tone, it may be supposed; but its pretty, gay-looking case, nevertheless, gives a certain air of splendor and fascination to that remote place of peasant worship. A peasant boy was presently found, willing, for a few *batzen*, to blow the bellows as long as Mendelssohn liked; and he sat down — I have since learned, for the last time that he ever sat down to an organ — for the pleasure of his three auditors. It seems to me now as if he never could have played more nobly. After one or two movements by Sebastian Bach, he began an improvisation in C minor, which took the canonical form of a prelude and fugue; his fancy kindling as he went on, and his face lit

up by that serene and elevated smile, the highest and most beautiful of its many expressions, — which all who knew him must remember, — while he drew forth those long and rich chains of sound which

"bring all heaven before the eyes,"

as old Milton sang. I feel, when I think of this organ-playing, as if I had taken leave of the greatest music for ever: since, in that exercise of his art, the amount of science he would bring was animated by a radiant fancy often dispensed with on like occasions; the want of which is supposed to be disguised by the glory of the sound, and the skilful intertexture of the parts. More perfectly, every genial sympathy, every sense of calm practical approval, could not be gratified. There was the true, gracious, gifted man, old in experience, but young in the quickness of his sensibilities, to be heard, — that day it seems to me more remarkably than ever. He was giving and receiving pleasure without parade, and from a store which had never been fuller of the highest thoughts and the richest fancies. Such things must come to an end; but they are never to be forgotten.

In the evening, chance brought the conversation on the ground of Italian music. He spoke, again, in warm tones of admiration, of Rossini's "Guillaume Tell;" and, to my surprise, with a good-natured cordiality, of Donizetti's "Fille du Régiment." "It is so merry," he said,

"with so much of the real soldier's life in it. They call it bad; and to be sure," he continued, with a half-humorous tone of self-correction, "it is surprising how easily one can become used to bad music!" Then he began to ask about Verdi, having heard that there was something like a new effect in some of his finales; and he would have this described, and shown to him, as well as could be done. He expressed a wish, too, to hear Handel's organ-concertos properly played, speaking about them doubtfully, and with hesitation, because of the frivolous and old-fashioned passages for solo stops, with which they were full; talked eagerly of the Grand Opera at Paris, as of a theatre for which one day he might be asked to write (I almost think that some negotiations had passed on the subject); and referred to his sojourn in Rome, as one which had been full of the highest and most important influences on his career. It was *apropos* of Rome, that some one mentioned Shelley's "Cenci," which had been given to him by one of his English friends. He spoke of it with almost angry dislike. "No: it is too horrible! it is abominable! I cannot admire such a poem."

The next morning, Mendelssohn drove with us to Lauterbrunnen. The view of the Jungfrau and the Silberhorn was superb as we went up the valley; nor can ever have the fall of the Staubbach looked more magical than it did in the bright light of that late

summer day, — its waters, gleaming like a shower of rockets, launched over the edge of the high cliff; their expanded fires spreading and mingling as they fell and faded. Almost my last distinct remembrance of Mendelssohn is, seeing him standing within the arch of the rainbow, which, as every reader of "Manfred" knows, the *Witch of the Alps* flings around the feet of the cascade, — looking upward, rapt and serious, thoroughly enjoying the scene. My very last is the sight of him turning down the road, to wind back to Interlachen alone; while we turned up to cross the Wengern Alp to Grindelwald. I thought even then, as I followed his figure, looking none the younger for the loose dark coat and the wide-brimmed straw-hat bound with black crape, which he wore, that he was too much depressed and worn, and walked too heavily. But who could have dreamed that his days on earth were so rapidly drawing to a close?

RELLSTAB'S ACCOUNT OF MENDELSSOHN'S VISIT, WHILE A BOY, TO GOETHE.

LUDWIG RELLSTAB, a German writer of considerable reputation, published, a few years since, in Germany, two volumes of his autobiography, replete with interesting gossip about distinguished men. He tells the following tale of the meeting of the author of "Faust," and the composer of "Elijah:"—

"In the evening, we assembled in Goethe's rooms to tea; for he had invited a large party of his Weimar musical acquaintances to make them acquainted with the boy's extraordinary talents. Presently Goethe made his appearance: he came from his study, and had a habit — at least I generally noticed it — of waiting till all the guests were assembled, ere he showed himself. Till that period, his son and daughter-in-law did the duties of host in the most amiable way. A certain solemnity was visible among the guests, prior to the entrance of the great poet; and even those who stood on terms of intimacy with him underwent a feeling of veneration. His slow, serious walk; his impressive features, which expressed the strength rather than

weakness of old age; the lofty forehead; the white, abundant hair; lastly, the deep voice, and slow way of speaking,—all united to produce the effect. His 'good evening' was addressed to all; but he walked up to Zelter first, and shook his hand cordially. Felix Mendelssohn looked up, with sparkling eyes, at the snow-white head of the poet. The latter, however, placed his hands kindly on the boy's head, and said, 'Now you shall play us something.' Zelter nodded his assent.

"The piano was opened, and lights arranged on the desk. Mendelssohn asked Zelter, to whom he displayed a thoroughly childish devotion and confidence, 'What shall I play?'

"'Well, what you can,' the latter replied, in his peculiarly sharp voice; 'whatever is not too difficult for you.'

"To me, who knew what the boy could do, and that no task was too difficult for him, this seemed an unjust depreciation of his faculties. It was at length arranged that he should play a fantasia; which he did to the wonder of all. But the young artist knew when to leave off; and thus the effect he produced was all the greater. A silence of surprise ensued when he raised his hands from the keys after a loud finale.

"Zelter was the first to interrupt the silence in his humorous way, by saying aloud, 'Ha! you must have been dreaming of kobolds and dragons: why, that went

over stick and stone!' At the same time there was a perfect indifference in his tone, as if there were nothing remarkable in the matter. Without doubt, the teacher intended to prevent, in this way, the danger of a too brilliant triumph. The playing, however, as it could not well otherwise, aroused the highest admiration of all present; and Goethe, especially, was full of the warmest delight. He encouraged the lad, in whose childish features joy, pride, and confusion were at once depicted, by taking his head between his hands, patting him kindly, and saying jestingly, 'But you will not get off with that. You must play more pieces before we recognize your merits.'

"'But what shall I play?' Felix asked: 'Herr Professor,' — he was wont to address Zelter by this title, — 'what shall I play now?'

"I cannot say that I have properly retained the pieces the young virtuoso now performed; for they were numerous. I will, however, mention the most interesting.

"Goethe was a great admirer of Bach's fugues, which musician of Berka, a little town about ten miles from Weimar, came to play to him repeatedly. Felix was therefore requested to play a fugue of the grand old master. Zelter selected it from the music-book; and the boy played it without any preparation, but with perfect certainty.

"Goethe's delight grew with the boy's extraordinary

powers. Among other things, he requested him to play a minuet.

"'Shall I play you the loveliest in the whole world?' he asked, with sparkling eyes.

"'Well, and which is that?'

"He played the minuet from 'Don Giovanni.'

"Goethe stood by the instrument, listening; joy glistening in his features. He wished for the overture of the opera after the minuet; but this the player roundly declined, with the assertion, that it could not be played as it was written, and nobody dared make any alteration in it. He, however, offered to play the overture to 'Figaro.' He commenced it with a lightness of touch, — such certainty and clearness as I never heard again. At the same time he gave the orchestral effects so magnificently that the effect was extraordinary; and I can honestly state, that it afforded me more gratification than ever an orchestral performance did. Goethe grew more and more cheerful and kind, and even played tricks with the talented lad.

"'Well, come,' he said, 'you have only played me pieces you know; but now we will see whether you can play something you do not know. I will put you on trial.'

"Goethe went out, re-entered the room in a few moments, and had a roll of music in his hand. 'I have fetched something from my manuscript collection.

Now we will try you. Do you think you can play this?'

"He laid a page, with clear but small notes, on the desk. It was Mozart's handwriting. Whether Goethe told us so, or it was written on the paper, I forget, and only remember that Felix glowed with delight at the name; and an indescribable feeling came over us all, partly enthusiasm and joy, partly admiration and expectation. Goethe, the aged man, laying a manuscript of Mozart, who had been buried thirty years, before a lad so full of promise for the future, to play at sight, — in truth such a constellation may be termed a rarity.

"The young artist played with the most perfect certainty, not making the slightest mistake, though the manuscript was far from easy reading. The task was certainly not difficult, especially for Mendelssohn, as it was only an adagio: still there was a difficulty in doing it as the lad did; for he played it as if he had been practising it for years.

"Goethe adhered to his good-humored tone, while all the rest applauded. 'That is nothing,' he said: 'others could read that too. But I will now give you something over which you will stick; so take care.'

"With these words, he produced another paper, which he laid on the desk. This certainly looked very strange. It was difficult to say if they were notes or only a

paper, ruled, and splashed with ink and blots. Felix Mendelssohn, in his surprise, laughed loudly. 'How is that written? who can read it?' he said.

"But suddenly he became serious; for while Goethe was saying, 'Now, guess who wrote it?' Zelter, who had walked up to the piano, and looked over the boy's shoulder, exclaimed, 'Why, Beethoven wrote that! any one could see it a mile off. He always writes with a broomstick, and passes his sleeve over the notes before they are dry. I have plenty of his manuscripts. They are easy to know.'

"At the mention of the name, as I remarked, Mendelssohn had suddenly grown serious, — even more than serious. A shade of awe was visible on his features. Goethe regarded him with searching eyes, from which delight beamed. The boy kept his eyes immovably fixed on the manuscript; and a look of glad surprise flew over his features as he traced a brilliant thought amid the chaos of confused, blurred notes.

"But all this lasted only a few seconds; for Goethe wished to make a severe trial, and give the performer no time for preparation. 'You see,' he exclaimed, 'I told you that you would stick. Now try it: show us what you can do.'

"Felix began playing immediately. It was a simple melody; if clearly written, a trifling, I may say no task, for even a moderate performer. But to follow it

through the scrambling labyrinth required a quickness and certainty of eye such as few are able to attain. I glanced with surprise at the leaf, and tried to hum the tune; but many of the notes were perfectly illegible, or had to be sought at the most unexpected corners, as the boy often pointed out with a laugh.

"He played it through once in this way, generally correctly, but stopping at times, and correcting several mistakes with a quick 'No, so:' then he exclaimed, 'Now I will play it to you.' And, this second time, not a note was missing. 'This is Beethoven, this passage,' he said once turning to me, as if he had come across something which sharply displayed the master's peculiar style. 'That is true Beethoven. I recognize him in it at once.'

"With this trial-piece Goethe broke off. I need scarcely add, that the young player again reaped the fullest praise, which Goethe veiled in mocking jests, that he had stuck here and there, and had not been quite sure."

RECOLLECTIONS OF MENDELSSOHN.

BY BAYARD TAYLOR.

MY first winter in Europe (that of 1844–5) was passed in Frankfort-on-the-Main. Among the advantages which I there enjoyed, not the least was that of educating, to some extent, a totally uncultivated taste for music, — taste only, not talent, — by hearing habitually the best productions of the best composers. The City Theatre at that time was noted throughout Germany for the classic character of the operas which were produced on its boards. It possessed an admirable orchestra; a company of singers, of whom, if none were great, none at least were indifferent; and a director who consulted the interests of art as the true means to advance his own. Not only Beethoven's "Fidelio," and all the operas of Mozart, including "Titus" and the "Abduction from the Seraglio," were given, but many forgotten operas of the past century were revived. My enjoyment of these works was, of course, more enthusiastic than intelligent; but, under the guidance of my friend and housemate, Richard Storrs Willis, I attained, at last, some appreciation of the characters of the various masters.

My highest measure of veneration was given to Beethoven; but, of living composers, none impressed me more profoundly than Mendelssohn. In him I found that rare union of imagination with the artistic sense (the classic instinct of proportion), which is the loftiest characteristic of genius. During the winter, the Society of St. Cecilia produced his "Walpurgisnacht;" the music to Goethe's words. I remember repeating to myself the opening lines, on the way to the concert-hall, and imagining a light, joyous air:—

"Now laughs the May:
To forests gray
The ice no more is clinging;
The snow has fled;
And every glade
Resounds with merry singing."

And I remember, too, the surprised delight with which I heard, instead, the long, ringing outcry of gladness, monotonous as sunshine, and as dazzling. Mendelssohn was then temporarily residing in Frankfort, and was himself present at the performance of the work. I was not, however, aware of this at the time.

Shortly afterwards, during the great Annual Fair, I was waking, one afternoon, with my friend Willis, along the northern bank of the Main. It was a deliciously warm, sunny day at the close of March; and the long stone quay was thronged with thousands of strangers from all parts of Europe. Poles, Bohemians,

Tyrolese, Italians, and Greeks were scattered through the crowd; and their various tongues and dialects continually met the ear. Against the ancient houses, beside the water-gate, were booths glittering with gaudy wares, and surrounded with groups of peasants in holiday costume; and up the river, over the old sandstone bridge, over the green meadows of Offenbach, rose the mountains of Spessart, — a dim, purple background to that broad picture of moving life. As we pushed through the crowd, my eyes, which had been wandering idly over the picturesque faces and costumes around us, were suddenly arrested by the face of a man, a little distance in front, approaching us. His head was thrown back; and his eyes, large, dark, and of wonderful brilliancy, were fixed upon the western sky. Long, thin locks of black hair, with here and there a silver streak, fell around his ears. His beard, of two or three days' growth, and his cravat, loosely and awkwardly tied, added to the air of absorption, of self-forgetfulness, which marked his whole appearance. He made his way through the crowd mechanically, evidently but half conscious of its presence.

As he drew nearer, I saw that his lips were moving, and presently heard the undertone of a deep, rich voice, chanting what appeared to be a choral; judging from the few bars which reached me in passing. It was evidently — as I felt immediately — a soliloquy in

music. I have not yet lost, and never shall lose, the impression it produced upon me, though I can no longer recall the notes. My companion grasped my arm, and whispered, "Mendelssohn!" as he slowly brushed past me; and, for a single moment, the voice of his inspiration sang at my very ear. I stopped instantly, and turned; yet, so long as I could follow him with my eye, he was still pressing slowly onward, with the same fixed, uplifted gaze, lost to every thing but his art.

I was twenty years old, and as enthusiastic and sentimental as youth of that age are prone to be. So I wrote, the next day, an eloquent letter to the composer, concluding with the request, that he would send me a line as a souvenir of the place and the season in which I first became acquainted with his works. (If there was any indiscretion in this, I have since received ample punishment for it.) He replied immediately in a very kind note, enclosing the score of a chorus in the "Walpurgisnacht," in his own manuscript:—

"Still shines the day,
Whene'er we may
A pure heart bring to thee."

Something kindly and cordial in his words inspired me with confidence to venture farther. I had written several poems on musical subjects during the winter; and it entered my mind, that I might use them as a means of introducing myself to his acquaintance. On

second thoughts, I selected the best, — a lyric, entitled "Beethoven" (which, I am now glad to say, was never published), — and set out for Mendelssohn's residence. He was then occupying modest apartments in the Bockenheimer Gasse, not far from the gate of that name. The servant ushered me into a plainly furnished room, containing a grand piano, and a few pictures and books, in addition to the ordinary articles. A moment afterwards, the door of an adjoining chamber opened, and Mendelssohn appeared. I explained, in rather an embarrassed manner, that I was the person who had written to him two days before, and begged pardon for the additional liberty I had taken. He at once gave me his hand, asked me to be seated, and drew another chair for himself to the little round table near the window.

I sat thus, face to face with him, and again looked into those dark, lustrous, unfathomable eyes. They were black, but without the usual opaqueness of black eyes, shining, not with a surface light, but with a pure, serene, planetary flame. His brow, white and unwrinkled, was high and nobly arched, with great breadth at the temples, strongly resembling that of Poe. His nose had the Jewish prominence, without its usual coarseness: I remember, particularly, that the nostrils were as finely cut and flexible as an Arab's. The lips were thin and rather long, but with an expression of indescribable sweetness in their delicate curves.

His face was a long oval in form; and the complexion pale, but not pallid. As I looked upon him, I said to myself, "The Prophet David!" and, since then, I have seen in the Hebrew families of Jerusalem, many of whom trace their descent from the princely houses of Israel, the same nobility of countenance. Those who have read the rhapsodical romance of "Charles Auchester," wherein the character of Seraphael is meant to represent Mendelssohn, will find his personality transfigured by one of his adorers, — yet, having seen that noble head, those glorious eyes, I scarcely wonder at the author's extravagance. The composer Benedict once told me, that, when he was pursuing his musical studies under Carl Maria von Weber, his fellow-student, the boy Mendelssohn, was a picture of almost supernatural beauty.

"You are an American," said he, after a pause. "I have received an invitation to visit New York, and should like to go; but we Germans are afraid of the sea. But I may go yet: who knows? Music is making rapid advances in America; and I believe there is a real taste for the art among your people." I assured him this was true, and hoped that he would still find it possible to visit us. "Are you a musician?" he asked. "No," said I: "I have devoted myself to literature. I have not achieved much, as yet; but I hope to succeed. I have ventured to bring with me a poem on Beethoven,

whom, I know, you honor as a master." — "Ah!" said he; "let me see it." He then read it through carefully, partly aloud, with a very good English pronunciation; and, on concluding, asked, "May I keep it? Here is a stanza which I like especially." (Excuse me from quoting it.) "Oh, you must persevere! Let your art be all in all to you. You have your life still before you; and who knows what you may make of it?"

I rose to leave, fearful that I might be detaining him from some important labor. He again shook hands, and said, playfully, "Now we know one another, you must come and see me whenever we happen to be in the same town. When you visit Leipzig or Berlin or Cologne, if you find I am there, come at once to my house; and we can have further talk, and become better acquainted."

I was never able to take advantage of this kind invitation. His cordial *auf wiedersehn!* were the last words I heard from him; and the spiritual beauty of his face is now, in memory, indeed, the beauty of an immortal spirit. Two years and a half afterwards (in November, 1847), he died; having not yet attained his thirty-ninth year.

To Mr. Taylor's sketch, we append that of another well-known countryman of our own, RICHARD STORRS WILLIS:—

"Mendelssohn was a man of small frame, delicate and fragile looking; yet possessing a sinewy elasticity and a power of endurance, which you would hardly suppose possible. His head appeared to have been set upon the wrong shoulders, — it seemed, in a certain sense, to contradict his body. Not that the head was disproportionately large; but its striking nobility was a standing reproof to the pedestal on which it rested. His eye possessed a peculiarity which has been ascribed to the eye of Sir Walter Scott, — a ray of light seemed often to proceed from its pupil to your own, as from a star. But yet, in the eyes of Mendelssohn, there was none of that rapt dreaminess so often seen among men of genius in art. The gaze was rather external than internal: the eye had more outwardness than inwardness of expression. In his gait, he was somewhat loose and shambling; he had a flinging motion of the limbs and a supple-jointedness, which, coupled with other little peculiarities of carriage, determined him — according to popular German tradition — as of Oriental origin. But this listlessness of bearing seemed to disappear entirely the moment he sat down to a piano-forte or organ, and came into artistic action. Then, like a full-blooded Arabian courser, he showed his points: you had before you a noble creature. All awkwardness disappeared: he was Mendelssohn, and no longer a son of Mendel. His wife was as beautiful as she was high-

bred and refined. She bore him children of remarkable personal charms. One boy, particularly, I was never weary of gazing at, for his extreme comeliness. He had his father's eye, and his mother's elegance and grace of figure."

MENDELSSOHN'S "ELIJAH."*

BY JOHN S. DWIGHT.

THE figure of the prophet is stationed, at once, boldly in the foreground. Even the overture is prefaced by a brief recitative, in which, with firm, deep voice, he declares that "there shall not be dew nor rain these years." Had Mendelssohn composed expressly for an American audience, who never begin to settle down into the listening state until they hear the human voice, we might have suspected him of an innocent manœuvre here, to procure silence and a hearing for the overture. In this overture, there is a sort of sullen, smothered, choking energy, fretting against chains self-forged: an obdurate wilfulness seems depicted, — a desperate impulse continually trying itself over again, only to find the same fatal limitations: it is the mood of an unrepenting criminal in his cell. The music is all of very short fibre, woven into the toughest, knottiest sort of texture: full of movement, but no progress. One or two little short starts of melody, constantly repeated, are its themes; and, though these are woven into a consistent and artistic whole, you hear nothing else from

* From "Dwight's Journal of Music," October, 1852

first to last. This is in the appropriate key of D minor and sheds the right murky coloring over all that is to follow; helping imagination to realize the state of Israel under Ahab. Drought and famine; life denied its outward sustenance; starved impulses, which, getting no expansion, only murmur of themselves, — are the alternate changes of one figure on this monotonous web of tones.

And now the suffering finds a voice. There is a chorus of the people — "Help, Lord! wilt thou quite destroy us?" — still in D minor, 4-4 time, andante. First a loud cry, "Help, Lord!" upon the minor common chord of D, the accompaniments traversing downwards and upwards through all its inversions for two bars: then, as the air climbs one note higher, the same process is repeated on the crying chord of the diminished seventh, which, through the dominant seventh upon C, would fain force its way out into the bright major key of F, and find relief; but, while the bass tends boldly that way, the chord of D minor, returning in the upper parts, smothers the tendency, producing a discordant mixture of tonics, which is peculiarly expressive on the words: "Wilt thou quite destroy us?" Out of the massive and compact beginning, the tenors lead the way in a freer movement, chanting the two plaintive phrases, "The harvest now is over, the summer days are gone," and "And yet no power cometh to

help us," which are duly taken up by the other voices, and passed round as the themes of a very beautiful and graceful fugue, which works itself up, by degrees, into the right chord for a transition to the key of E major, when the fugue is quelled for a while into a uniform movement, "Will then the Lord be no more God in Zion?" with a fitful, tremulous accompaniment: but it soon breaks loose again; and amid renewals of the cry, "Help, Lord!" from single voices, terminates the chorus. A remarkable choral recitative succeeds, in which the complaints of famine come up, in distinct, successive fragments of melody, from one mass of voices after another: "The deep affords no water," — "The infant children ask for bread," &c., — exceedingly expressive, if the voices start the theme with perfect concert. Next, we have a plaintive duet for sopranos, "Zion spreadeth her hands for aid," — one of those wild and tender melodies (each part a melody however), in which we get the genuine aroma of Mendelssohn's peculiar genius, as in his "Lieder." There are several such in "Elijah." In the pauses of the duet, which is in A minor, and forming a sort of background to it, is constantly heard the burthen (an old Jewish chant) of the entire female alternating with the entire male chorus, in unison, on the words, "Lord, bow thine ear to our prayer." The effect is as poetic as it is original. At first it was the popular complaint of the short har-

rest; then, in the recitative, it was the children hungering at home; now it is youthful loveliness and beauty interceding, as by special affinity, with heaven. (Remark this fine touch of the delicate and feminine side of the composer's genius: had this duet been left out, it would hardly have been Mendelssohn.)

So much in description of the drought. Now comes the appeal of Obadiah to the consciences of the people, — a tenor recitative, — "Rend your hearts," &c., followed by the exquisitely tender and consoling tenor song (andante, in E flat), "If with all your hearts ye truly seek me." If you compare it with Handel's "Comfort ye, my people," you have the whole difference of complexion between these two deeply religious natures. In that, it is the perfect sanguine buoyancy and confident announcement of hope: in this, it is hope tinged with sadness, — more of reflective yearning, and less of the child's unquestioning acceptance and assurance. It would compare more closely, however, with "He shall feed his flock," — only that is an alto song, and this a tenor, as befits the difference of sentiment: for, in that, the feminine element, or love, is all in all; whereas, in this, the masculine element of justice tempers love. In this song, as in the duet before, and as throughout the oratorio, Mendelssohn displays his rare poetic invention in accompaniment: in every bar, at first, it takes, as if unconsciously, the form of "seek and find,"

— a climbing *arpeggio* answered by a full chord; when it reaches the words, "Oh that I knew where I might find him!" the whole air pulses to the heart-beat of the melody, as the violins divide the measure into crystal and precise vibrations. Then breaks out the turbulent chorus in C minor, "Yet doth the Lord see it not, . . . his wrath will pursue us," &c.; full of diminished sevenths and of discords, from bold overlapping of one chord upon another. Its vehement and angry motion is suddenly arrested on a discord of this sort (dominant seventh upon the tonic), in the words, "Till he destroys us;" and, after the pause, follows the grave, massive, psalm-like, solid piece of counterpoint, all in long half-notes, "For he, the Lord our God, he is a jealous God," &c., thrown up, like a mountain-range of the primeval granite, in the midst of this great musical creation; yet its solemnity is not all barren, for, ere long, its sides wave with the forests, sprung from the accumulated soil of ages; and the solemn procession of the clouds in heaven passes in shadows over their surface: the key shifts to the major; the accompaniments acquire a freer movement; rich, refreshing modulations succeed each other smoothly; and the vocal parts diverge in separate streams of perfect harmony at the thought, "His mercies on thousands fall," &c. Fit prelude to the voice of angels! An alto voice, in recitative, bids Elijah "hence to Cherith's brook," tell-

ing of the "ravens" who will feed him. Then a remarkable double quartet (four male and four female voices) follows, with the words, "For he shall give his angels charge," &c. The very simplicity, together with the animated movement of this, requiring perfect precision and blending of the eight distinct parts, makes it difficult to convey its beauty in a performance. Again the angel warns him to "Zarephath," to the "widow woman;" and the homely images of the "barrel of meal" and the "cruise of oil" do not "fail," or fall, in any wise, short of dignity and beauty in Mendelssohn's pure recitative, which quite transcends the usual common-place.

We have now reached the first in the series of dramatic sketches, of which the body of the oratorio is mainly composed: the miracle of raising the widow's son. The sentiment of the marvellous is first raised by the accompaniments, which, confined chiefly to the violins and treble wood-instruments, keep up a light tremolo, to a melody, full of sad, sweet humility (E minor, 6-8), introducing the lamentation of the woman over her son. The answer of the prophet, and his prayer, "Turn unto her," are in the major of the key, in grave, fourfold measure. The return of the tremolo, in the still more mystical key of F-sharp major, — swelling and diminishing, — raises expectation to the height, and makes natural the woman's question of surprise, "Wilt

thou show wonders to the dead?" The prayer is renewed, and so, too, the woman's exclamation, striking a higher note in her growing earnestness. Yet a third time the prophet prays, amid crashing, measured peals of harmony, announcing that the miraculous agency is at work restoring life. The joy and devout thankfulness of the mother, prompting the question, "What shall I render the Lord?" are followed by the brief but beautiful duet between her and the prophet, "Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart;" which is in broad fourfold measure, and glides directly into the chorus, "Blessed are the men who fear him;" — a chorus distinguished by the soft, rippling flow of the accompaniments, the violoncellos keeping up one uniformly varied and continuous figure in sixteenths through the whole of it; while the vocal parts steal in, one after another, with the same whispered melody, which, with that multitude of voices, is like the soft rustle of the bending grass before successive breathings of the west wind, — until the words, "Through darkness riseth light to the upright," where the sopranos shout forth a clarion call, climbing through the harmonic intervals of the fifth of the key, as far as its tenth, and closing with a cadence upon B; which note the basses take for a starting-point, and thence repeat nearly the same figure, ending in A, where it is taken up by the altos, and again echoed, ere it is half out of their mouths, by the tenors,

until all come unitedly upon the words, "He is gracious, compassionate, righteous." These words are treated somewhat after the manner of, "And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor," &c., in Handel's sublime chorus; though no such stupendous effects are here attempted. The original whispered melody flows in again with mingled fragments of the second theme; and the chorus ends with echoing, retreating calls of "Blessed!" while that rippling accompaniment floats skyward, and is lost.

Now comes the appearance of Elijah before Ahab, and the second dramatic scene, — the challenge of the priests of Baal. The several proposals of Elijah (in bold recitative) are echoed in choral bursts from the people, "Then we shall see whose God is the Lord," &c. The invocation of the priests of Baal is very effective musically, however fruitless for their purpose; and the music of it is in striking contrast with the severe and spiritual tone of the rest of the oratorio. Noisy, impetuous, full of accent and of animal life, it befits the worshippers of natural things; and it commences in the key of nature, or F major. First, it is in 4-4 time, a double chorus, with a sort of bacchanalian energy, "Baal, we cry to thee;" then sets in an allegro 3-4 movement, with arpeggio accompaniment in thirds, in single chorus, basses and altos in unison crying, "Hear us, Baal! hear, mighty god;" and so-

pranos and tenors, in unison more earnest, following "Baal, oh, answer us! let thy flames fall and extirpate the foe," &c. In vain: no help for them! In long loud cadences (the *minor third* so loved by Mendelssohn), with hopeless pauses between, their "Hear us!" floats away upon the empty air. The prophet taunts them, "Call him louder." Again they raise their cry, this time in F-sharp minor, in hurried 4-4 time; the full force of the orchestra reiterating quick, short, angry notes, as if they were all instruments of percussion, and trying restless and discordant modulations, as the voices, with agonized impatience, repeat, "Now arise; wherefore slumber?" Again the prophet taunts; and again they call on Baal, still in the same wild key, but with the most furious presto movement, in 6-8, ending, as before, in fruitless cadences: "Hear and answer," succeeded by unbroken pauses.

It is now Elijah's turn. In a solemn adagio air, expressive of sublimest faith and feeling of the right, and even of a tenderness which you cannot help contrasting afterwards with his ruthless slaughter of his defeated rivals, he offers up his prayer to the "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel." This is followed by a short and simple quartet: "Cast thy burden upon the Lord." All this was in the confident key of E-flat major. In his invocation, "O Thou who makest thine angels spirits, Thou whose ministers are flaming fires!

let them now descend," the prophet's voice, unaccompanied, rises a minor third in uttering the first clause, followed by the full minor chord *pianissimo* from the instruments; in the second clause, it ascends (through the minor third again) to the fifth, again more loudly answered by the instruments; and, in the third clause, it reaches the octave, when bursts forth the wild descriptive chorus, "The fire descends from heaven!" This change to the minor in the invocation makes a presentiment of miracle, as surely as a preternatural change of daylight, or the noonday darkening of eclipse. The fire-chorus, with its imitative accompaniments, we will not attempt to describe: it is fearfully grand, and terminates in a massive choral, "The Lord is God," &c.; the earth quakes as it rolls away, with the prolonged tremolo of the double basses, during which Elijah dooms the prophets of Baal.

This scene closes with two remarkable songs. First, a bass solo by Elijah, "Is not his word like a fire, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock into pieces?" Here the composer evidently had in mind a similar great solo in Handel's "Messiah." Both song and accompaniment are cast in the same iron mould, requiring a gigantic voice to execute it. Indeed, it is almost too great to be sung, as some parts are too great to be acted. Next, the exquisite alto solo, "Woe unto them who forsake him!" which is again of the "Lieder ohne

Worte" order, having that characteristic wild-flower beauty so indescribable in the melodies of Mendelssohn.

Finally, we have the coming of rain, prepared in a dialogue between the people, the prophet, and the youth whom he sends forth to "look toward the sea." There is a gradual mellowing of the instruments, so that you seem almost to snuff rain in the parched air. The responses of the youth, clear, trumpet-toned, in the major chord of C, as he declares, "There is nothing," each time with the effect enhanced by the humid, continuous, high monotone from the orchestra, and finally announcing, amid the mysterious thrilling of the air with violin *thirds*, "a little cloud, no bigger than a man's hand;" then the "blackening the heavens with clouds and with wind;" and then the loud rushing of the storm, — are wrought up to an admirable climax; and the chorus breaks forth, like a perfect flood of joy, refreshing and reviving all things, "Thanks be to God! He laveth the thirsty land. The waters gather; they rush along; they are lifting their voices! The stormy billows are high; their fury is mighty: but the Lord is above them, and Almighty!" This rain-chorus (which is in E-flat major) is in perfect contrast with that fire-chorus. The music itself is as welcome as showers after long drought; as tears of joy and reconciliation after years of barren, obstinate self-will and cold-

ess; as the revisiting of inspired thoughts to the dry dull, jaded, unsuggestive brain; — and that not the less because all the music which precedes is rich and various. The voices seem to launch themselves along rejoicing, like the copious billows of a torrent; while the instruments, by a well-chosen figure, imitate the sound of dripping streams. You feel the changing temperature of the air in some of those modulations. What a gusto, what a sense of coolness, in some of those flat sevenths in the bass! There are certain chords there which we would call *barometrical*, or atmospheric, if the extravagance of fancy might be allowed to keep pace with the fullness of delight in listening to this tone-translation of one of the inexhaustible phenomena of nature.

The second part has for its subject-matter the reaction of the popular sentiment against Elijah, at the instigation of the queen, his sojourn in the wilderness, and his translation to heaven. This is prefaced by a song of warning to Israel, — "Hear ye, Israel," — for a soprano voice, in B minor, 3-8 time: one of those quaint little wild-flowers of melody again, which seem to have dropped so often from another planet at the feet of Mendelssohn. The short-breathed, syncopated form of the accompaniment, and the continual cadence of the voice through a third, give it an expression of singularly childlike innocence and seriousness. Then

follows, in the major of the key, in statelier 3-4 measure and with trumpet obligato, a cheering air, which differs from the last, as a bracing October morning from a soft summer sabbath evening, "Thus saith the Lord; I am he that comforteth," &c., leading into the very spirited chorus, in G major, "Be not afraid, saith God the Lord." This has a full, broad, generous, Handelian flow, like a great river "rolling rapidly;" and as your ear detects the mingling separate currents when you heed the river's general roar more closely, so hurrying, pursuing, mingling, go the voices of the fugue, "Though thousands languish," which gives the chorus a more thoughtful character for a moment, before they are all merged again in the grand whole of that first strain, "Be not afraid!"

One cannot conceive how the scene which follows could have been wrought into music with a more dramatic effect. The prophet denounces Ahab; then the queen in the low tones of deepest excitement, in angry and emphatic sentences of recitative, demands, "Hath he not prophesied against all Israel?" — "Hath he not destroyed Baal's prophets?" — "Hath he not closed the heavens?" &c.; and to each question comes an ominous, brief choral response, "We heard it with our ears," &c.; and finally the furious chorus, "Woe to him, he shall perish," in which the quick, short, petulant notes of the orchestra seem to crackle and boil with rage.

Yielding to Obadiah's friendly warning, the prophet journeys to the wilderness: and here we have the tenderest and deepest portions of all this music; here we approach Elijah in his solitary communings and his sufferings; here we feel a more human interest and sympathy for the mighty man of miracle; we forget the terrible denouncer of God's enemies, and love his human heart, all melting to the loveliness of justice, and mourning over Israel's insane separation of herself from God, more than over his own trials. Follow him there! genial guides stand ready to your imagination's bidding, — first, the grand old words of the brief and simple Hebrew narrative; then the befitting and congenial music of this modern descendant of the Hebrews, this artist son of Mendel. Listen to that grand, deep song which he has put here into the mouth of Elijah, "It is enough, O Lord! now take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers," &c. What resignation! His great soul, bowed to that unselfish sadness, gives you a nobler, more colossal image, than the fallen Saturn in the "Hyperion" of Keats. The grave and measured movement of the orchestra marks well his weary, thoughtful, heavy steps. But his soul summons a new energy, the smouldering music blazes up, as he remembers, "I have been very jealous for the Lord."

Follow him! Fatigue brings sleep, and sleep brings

angel voices. Let that sweet tenor-recitative interpret his wanderings and his whereabouts, and the angelic voices interpret the heaven in his heart. "Under a juniper-tree in the wilderness!" Mark the quaint simplicity of the words, and how heartily the musical vein in Mendelssohn adapts itself to such child's narrative. And now hear, as the composer heard, the heavenly voices floating down. It is a scene almost as beautiful as that portrayed in Handel's music for the nativity of the Messiah. First a trio (female voices) without accompaniments, "Lift thine eyes to the mountains," pure and chaste as starlight; then the lovely chorus (for all four parts), "He, watching over Israel, slumbers not, nor sleeps." If the trio was like heaven descending, this is like the peacefulness of earth encompassed with heaven; it has a gentle, soothing, pastoral character, like "There were shepherds watching their flocks by night." The universal bosom seems to heave with the serene feeling of protection, and the heart to throb most joyously, most gently, with the equal and continuous rise and fall of those softly modulated triplets in the accompaniments. Voice after voice breathes out the melody; and what unspeakable tenderness in the new theme which the tenors introduce! "Shouldst thou, walking in grief, languish, He will quicken thee."

Again follow him. "Forty days and forty nights"—so sings the angel (alto recitative), and again the noble

recitative of the prophet — "wrestling with the Lord in prayer:" "O Lord! I have labored in vain; ... oh that I now might die!" This is relieved by the profoundly beautiful alto song, in the natural key, fourfold measure, "Oh, rest in the Lord;" and he resumes, "Night falleth round me, O Lord! Be thou not far from me; my soul is thirsting for thee, as a thirsty land;" which last suggestion the instruments accompany with a reminiscence from that first chorus, descriptive of the drought, "The harvest now is over," &c.

And now he stands upon the mount, and, "Behold! God, the Lord, passed by!" We are too weary with fruitless attempts to convey a notion of the different portions of this oratorio by words, to undertake the same thing with this most descriptive and effective chorus. One cannot but remark the multitude of subjects which the story of Elijah offers for every variety of musical effects. The orchestra preludes the coming of the "mighty wind." Voices, accompanied in loud, high unison, proclaim, "The Lord passed by;" the storm swells up amid the voices, wave on wave, with brief fury, and subsides; and again the voices in whispered harmony pronounce, "Yet the Lord was not in the tempest." The same order of treatment is repeated with regard to the "earthquake," and with regard to the "fire." All this is in E minor: the key opens into

the major, into the moist, mild, spring-like atmosphere of E major; and the voices in a very low, sweet chorus, in long notes, whisper the coming of the "still, small voice," while the liquid, stroking divisions of the accompaniment seem "smoothing the raven down of darkness till it smiles." The seraphim are heard in double chorus, chanting, after the soprano quartet, "Holy, holy," &c., — a high, clear strain, of awful purity and majesty. One more recitative from the prophet, "I go on my way in the strength of the Lord," with the air, "For the mountain shall depart;" during which the instruments tread on with stately, solid steps, in notes of uniform length, in 6-4 measure, — and we have the marvellously descriptive, awe-inspiring chorus, which describes his ascent to heaven in the fiery chariot. There is no mistaking the sound of the swift-revolving fiery wheels, suggested by the accompaniment.

Another beautiful tenor song, "Then shall the righteous shine;" and a fit conclusion to the whole is made by two grand choruses, foreshadowing the consummation of all prophecy in the God-Man, just leaving off where Handel's "Messiah," the oratorio of oratorios, begins. The first — "Behold, my servant and mine elect" — has much of the grandeur, but not the simplicity, of Handel. It is separated from the last by an exquisite quartet, "Come, every one that thirsteth,"

which is wholly in the vein of Mendelssohn. And the whole closes with a solid, massive fugue, in the grand old style, "Lord, our Creator, how excellent thy name!"

MOSCHELES ON THE CHARACTER OF MENDELSSOHN.

TRANSLATED FROM HIS "LIFE AND DIARY."

[Since the first editions of this book were published, Moscheles has died; and his life has been written by his widow. This book reached me soon after publication; and I translated the following pages, before an English translation, under the head of "Recent Music and Musicians," was announced by Holt & Williams. As they contain all of that work, of special interest, which relates to Mendelssohn, I take the liberty of inserting here my own translation, to add completeness to this volume. At the same time, I cannot forbear thanking the American publishers for giving us in English dress Mrs. Moscheles' entertaining volume, for which she deserves the thanks of all musicians.]

On the 31st of October, Moscheles came to Berlin. In his diary at this time there is observable a kind of haste, as if he pushed every thing to one side in order that he might devote the more time to the Mendelssohn family; and there are whole pages devoted to this genial theme. On his introduction to this household, he records his impressions as follows: "Such a family as this is I have never seen before. The fifteen-year-old boy, Felix, is a phenomenon whose like is nowhere to be found. What are all wonder-children in comparison with him? They are mere wonder-children, and nothing more; but this Felix Mendelssohn is already a mature artist, though but fifteen. We were together for hours; and I had to play a good deal, although I wanted to be a listener; for Felix had a concerto in G-minor, a double concerto, and several motets, to show; and all was so genial, and at the same time so correct! His older sister, Fanny, also most richly endowed, played fugues and *pascailles* from Bach by heart, and with amazing accuracy. Both of the parents make an impression as people of the highest culture; for

they are far from being vain of their children. They are very solicitous about Felix and his future, and wonder whether there is any thing in him which will ripen into real greatness. Will he not, they ask, be like so many precocious children, and suddenly go out in darkness? I could not sufficiently insist that I had not the least doubt about his having genius; but I had to repeat it many times before I could convince them."

The pleasure of this acquaintance was mutual; and, the oftener Moscheles came to see the Mendelssohns, the more glad were they to welcome him. The parents wanted him to give lessons to their son; but he would not consent. In his diary he writes, "He has no need of lessons: if he sees any thing noteworthy in my style of playing, he catches it from me at once." Nevertheless, on their urgent and repeated request, that he would give him a few hours' instruction, Moscheles did so; but he writes, "To-day, from two to three, I gave Felix his first lesson; but not a moment could I conceal the fact from myself, that I was with my master, not with my pupil." Six days later he writes, "Felix's lessons grow in interest: he has already played my Allegri di Bravura, my concertos, &c. And how he has played them! He catches at the slightest hint I give, and guesses my meaning before I speak."

He was with the Mendelssohns day after day; attended their musical parties; made the acquaintance of Rahel, the wife of Varnhagen von Ense, and of Zelter, and on the 15th of December took a reluctant leave of Berlin, and his new friends.

At a subsequent visit to Berlin, in 1826, he writes, "How great was my joy as Felix played, with his sister Fanny, his new overture to the Midsummer Night's Dream! and how beautiful was his sonata in E-major! He also played for me his great overture in C, with the leading theme for trumpets; and a little caprice, which he called 'Absurdity.' This young but mighty genius has been taking giant strides forward, which, however, are not recognized except by Zelter, Berger, and a few others. This prophet, too, must be without honor among his own people."

The next glimpse which we have of Mendelssohn is in

London, in 1829, when he visited Moscheles there. His father had already written, inquiring whether Moscheles would advise Felix's coming to the great city with some of his compositions, among them the Midsummer Night's Dream overture. It did seem advisable to the master; and accordingly the young composer came. Of the visit, Moscheles has kept the following record: "I hired for him lodgings at 203 Portland Street; and, since he came, we have had the greatest delight in his society, and in his artistic skill. As a man, he is most dear to us. Merry, and yet full of sympathy with us in our bereavement, and care of our surviving yet weakly child, he is always ready to exchange the attractive enjoyments of London for our solitude in the country; and knows just how to minister graciously and healingly to our suffering spirits, and to bring us a certain compensation for our loss." And how beautiful it was to see him bring out his new compositions, and with childlike modesty to hang upon Moscheles' lips, and wait for his judgment! "Every one else," says Moscheles, "would have seen already that I had my master in him: yet he continues to regard himself as my pupil, and I cannot get him to take his true position in relation to me. The enthusiasm which his Midsummer Night's Dream overture called out from the public does not intoxicate him. The piece must all be improved, he thinks; and my personal praise he received in this childlike way: 'Does it, then, please you? Then I am glad.'"

While visiting Moscheles, he showed to them the manuscripts of his cantata, based on a choral in A-minor; a sixteen-voice chorus, "Hora est;" and a violin quartet in A-minor. He would also not disdain little musical conceits and novelties for the entertainment of his friends. He wrote in Moscheles' album a charming bit called "Perpetual Motion;" and other trifles dropped from his pen during the visit.

With Mendelssohn there appeared in London, at this time, Neukomm, the pupil of Haydn, a noble character and highly trained man, who, as a friend, was most true; but who, as a composer, though solid, clear, and careful, yet lacked the Attic salt. He was at that time bringing out his oratorios, "The Ten Commandments," and

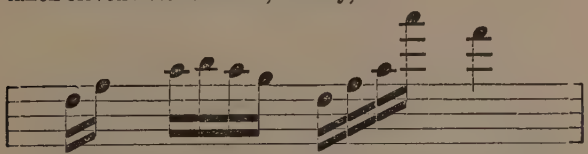
"Christ:" and he was adapting some parts to the voices of Braham and Phillips. At first he was received with enthusiasm; but he had not the ability to retain the love of the English public.

Yet Mendelssohn and Neukomm, who often met at Moscheles' house, had a great regard for each other; that is to say, each recognized in the other a noble character. As musicians, however, the gentle Neukomm found the energetic Mendelssohn too active, too vigorous, too profuse in the use of brass, too hasty in his *tempo*, too unquiet in his play; and, on the other hand, Mendelssohn would sometimes exclaim, in youthful impatience, "If the excellent Neukomm would only write better music! He is so good in what he says, and in his letters; but, when he comes to notes, he does produce such commonplace!"

We subjoin one of Mendelssohn's letters, written to congratulate Moscheles on the birth of a son, and in the merriest vein:—

You see the wind-instruments and the violins; for the head of a family must not wait till I come, but must have a cradle-song, with kettle-drums and trumpets, and brass-band music; for the mere violins are by no means enough. Abundant joy and happiness and blessings on the little man! May all go well with him! may the world be a good world for him! And so he is to be called Felix? That is very kind and gracious in you, that he is to be regularly my godson; and my first present shall be the whole orchestra above,* to accompany him his life through: the trumpets, when he shall become famous; the flutes, when he shall fall in love; the cymbals, when his beard comes; the piano explains itself; and, when people shall play badly with him, — as they will at times, — why, there are the kettle-drums, and the big bass-drum in the background. Enough of this nonsense! but really I am merry at heart to-day, as I think of your happiness, and of the time when I shall share it.

I am greatly delighted with your septet: Klingemann has taken eleven notes out of it, namely, —



* One of Mendelsohn's easy pen-and-ink sketches was in the original letter. — ED.

and they please me much. I can well imagine what a bright, lively bit this last must be. Don't expect too much of my things which I shall bring with me. You will, doubtless, often find in them traces of that ill-humor from which I emancipate myself only slowly and with difficulty. It often seems to me as if I had never learned how to compose, and must begin away back at the alphabet; but I am out of that feeling now, and my last things will sound better. It was very nice that your letter came to me while I was in my room alone, and quietly composing; and I hope, as you do too, that my answer may hit you in your house, and in the home-circle all well and happy; and we shall see whether I have as good success in my wishes for you as you had for me. I am in a hurry, and must close; for I had but a half an hour in all, and half of the time went into that fine drawing. But I have nothing further to say to you than just this: Good luck to you, and a steadfast heart, and a happy meeting! My family are all well, and send their greetings, and rejoicings over your good fortune. My father is suffering in his eyes, without relief; and this troubles us, though we hope for a speedy bettering. My sister and I are playing a good deal of music every Sunday morning, with accompaniment; and I have just received from the bookbinder a grass-green volume of Moscheles, because the next time your trio is to be played. But, farewell, farewell, and be happy.

Thy

FELIX MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY.

BERLIN, Feb. 27, 1833.

To Moscheles' wife he writes, under the same date:—

DEAR MADAME MOSCHELES, — Although I can send you only a few lines, yet I must express my good wishes, and my joy over the happy event that has occurred with you. It is delightful to think that I am soon to make the personal acquaintance of the little stranger, and that he is to bear my name. I beg you to put off the christening till I come: I will make all possible haste. It is good that it is a boy: we must make a musician of him, that all that we are striving after without being able to reach may be attained by him. But all the same if he doesn't reach it: if he is a good man, — that is the main thing. I can see already how the two older sisters, Emily and Serena, will lord it over him. When he comes to be fourteen, he will have many a side-glance to endure at his long arms, and his too short body and his poor voice; but he will then soon be a man. Then he will have to be their protector, and have a great many evenings spoiled for him by *ennui* while serving as their convoy. You have probably scolded a little about my neglect of writing. But you must forgive me: I will do better. Certainly I shall, when I get to London, and can ask my own ques-

tions, and improvise the answers to yours; but I will do better before that. My sisters send a thousand greetings to you, my parents also; and we all congratulate you heartily on this first son. I must now begin the very close of my symphony: it is right at my finger-tips; and that is what is spoiling my writing now, and demanding my time. Excuse my hastily written words: what they mean, you know well.

Your devoted

FELIX MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY.

The proposed visit followed soon; and Mendelssohn came to London, accompanied by his noble father. In a letter, Moscheles hints at the great pleasure he had in this visit. "What have we not played together! He had to run over his own works for me, and then I to him; which I read from the original manuscript score, while he accompanied, imitating the sound of a trumpet, or sometimes letting his fine tenor voice play the part of a chorus. And he has arranged his overtures for four hands; and we practise them together till we have thoroughly mastered them."

They often played together Beethoven's sonatas, and throwing in, by way of fun, improvisations of the drollest kind, and musical caricatures. Once he took the nursery song, "Polly, put the kettle on: we'll all have tea," as a theme, and made all manner of merriment for the children, besides taking them to the Zoölogical Garden, and having the gayest time with them there. Among the many excellent men who came to London in the interest of music, we had many good friends; but of them all, Mendelssohn was the best. What drew him and Moscheles so closely together was, that they were both of them true, good, and genial men: this had as much to do with it as their common love for music. Moscheles was amazed at the talents of the younger man; yet he looked at the rapid strides which he was making, without a particle of envy; and not even the fact that Mendelssohn was exempt from the necessity of earning his living called forth no unworthy feeling in Moscheles, whose whole life was pierced with domestic necessities. Mendelssohn, on the other hand, was all pious thankfulness for the treasury of experiences which the elder had gotten together in his works for the piano.

But, while they were passing delightful days together

some sad clouds swept over the sky. Zelter, Mendelssohn's famous teacher, died; and, when the news came, the pupil came to Moscheles' house, and said, "I cannot work to-day: I should like to stay with you." Afterwards he was often with these friends. Were Madame Moscheles unwell, and unable to go out, Mendelssohn would remain at home with her, and spend the evenings there. Were Felix worried, he always found a resting-place in the sofa-corner. There he would sit for a little while, the children, meantime, keeping as still as mice; and then, after this refreshment, he would be as lively as ever, and would take hold of some severe musical work, or read the morning paper, or go to some political meeting. Sometimes Madame Moscheles would allow herself to reprove him for being so disturbed and impatient at being interrupted by callers; but he would cut her short by asking, "Well, why do they come at exactly the time when I am having a good time playing with Moscheles?" Whenever he went away, he begged Madame Moscheles to drop him a line about all the little family matters, since her husband was too busy. And when she would say, "Yes; but no answer from you, for you are a celebrated man, and have better things to do," he would insist that it was no such thing.

Not long after this, Mendelssohn's father died; and a letter of Moscheles thus alludes to this event: "Still our Felix remains silent: he has not got over the loss of his father, or he would write. What we hear about him is not refreshing. He feels that he has lost his best support, and that an indescribable emptiness has come to him, so that he cannot work. This must be changed. But I can understand his loss, when I remember the days which I have spent with him in his father's house. The feeble, almost blind old gentleman had a mind so active, and a judgment so sure, that I ceased to wonder why he was so honored; for I shared in the common feeling towards him." How deeply this unexpected loss was felt by the family, the following letters will show. The first is from the bereaved widow: —

BERLIN, Jan. 12, 1836.

In the dreadful and utterly unlooked-for blow which has stricken me, it will be a comfort to you, with your sympa-

thizing heart, dear Madame Moscheles, when I assure you that the two days which your husband spent with us, in October, were among the most cheerful of all near his life's close, and that he cherished the memory of them to the end. And, indeed, every thing conspired to satisfy all his wishes. Every thing had been carefully thought over by him; and he left nothing uncared for and undone. And how noble, gentle, lovely, and exalted was his spirit! — every day more complete, more strong, more aspiring. With what remarks, even the night before his death, he listened to the "Profession de Foi du Vicaire Savoyard" in Rousseau's "Emile!" How peaceful, how serene, was that last gathering about his bed, before sleep — the eternal — came! I had never thought of death in connection with such painlessness; and so I could not comprehend that I was at an epoch so fearful and so inevitable. With not a suspicion of my misery, I was in a moment widowed and pitiable.

My children — all of them — conducted themselves like angels; and I should be unthankful to fate if I did not, with all my grief, recognize how much remains to me. Felix's manner of bearing agitated me, at the outset, to the last degree; but among us women he found tears and new spirit. It is good that he is so near us: he has visited us twice since.

Accept my thanks, my dear, dear friend, for all the kindness which you showed my husband in London. In his later hours, which were in a measure unoccupied because of his loss of sight, he used often to say, "I have no *ennui:* I have lived through a great deal that is beautiful and interesting;" and then he would talk of the time in London, and of his interviews with you there.

There is also a letter from Mendelssohn's eldest sister, Fanny Hensel, from which I take an extract: —

Do you remember, dear Mr. Moscheles, how, on one of the evenings which you spent with us in the autumn, Felix played that wonderfully fine adagio in F-sharp, from one of Haydn's quartets. Father loved Haydn exceedingly; and every thing of his took hold of him. He wept while listening to the one of which I speak, and afterwards said that to him it was full of sadness. This remark struck Felix as strange; for the direction "mesto" stood over it, and it had awakened a sense of liveliness in the rest of us. Father's judgment of music was extraordinarily keen and true for a man who had no knowledge of the science as such. He valued you very highly, dear Mr. Moscheles, and loved you very dearly. I have no more fear for Felix, for he has collected himself very much; and, although his grief remains very deep, yet it is a natural sorrow, and not of that anguishing sort as at the first, when he filled us all with double pain and care. The better season, and travel, will, I hope, put him into that improved

state of mind which he must seek, if he wants to progress, to live, in father's sense, as, indeed, he has always done. There was a connection between him and his father, such as is very seldom seen here on earth.

On the 3d of September, 1832, Mendelssohn wrote to Madame Moscheles, "Klingemann remains a knight of the order of bachelors, and I bear him company. Probably in thirty years more we shall be glad to marry; but then no girl will have us. You may cut this prophecy out of this letter, and save it carefully: in thirty years it will be proved whether it was true." On the 6th of October, however, there came a letter from Mendelssohn's mother, with quite the contrary purport.

BERLIN, Oct. 6, 1836.

Rumor, which travels so much faster than other people, on cars and steamers, has probably enlightened you already regarding Felix's engagement, my dearest Madame Moscheles. I cannot, however, deny myself the pleasure of communicating to you and your husband, his dear friends, that which is to us so exceedingly agreeable tidings. You who are a mother, and know a mother's feeling, can imagine how strange it is to me to know neither his betrothed nor any member of her family, and even to be a stranger to the very name. And it will be a punishment to my altogether too great liveliness, that I shall have to wait a long time before seeing the fair unknown one. But you also know how disinterested is a mother's feeling; and so you will be able to measure the joy which we have over Felix's happiness. The only bitterness lies in the unescapable thought, If only his father had lived to share it! He wished that such a day might come for Felix, but he did not expect it. Perhaps his father's disappointment in this may have been Felix's most urgent reason for thinking of marriage. We saw in him last Christmas such an inexpressible sadness, such inward disturbance even in his artistic strivings, so much that was cramped and aimless, — that his sisters charged him to find a new object of life.

An acquaintance with a lady in Frankfort soon drove him from his sad strain; and now he is the happy betrothed of his Cecile. Her mother, Madame Jeanreneaud was the wife of the deceased pastor of the French Reformed Church in Frankfort] . . .

The joy of Mendelssohn's friends over this engagement was great; for they soon learned in Cecile Jeanreneaud he had found a rich treasure, a spirit kindred with his own, and one which could understand him, and prize

him at his true worth. At about this time, too, England gave him a great triumph. His "St. Paul" was first produced at Liverpool, and was received with the greatest enthusiasm. Moscheles, who had engaged to revise the work for England, writes of it in his diary: "To my great delight, I often have the magnificent 'St. Paul' in hand, and bury myself in it. Its chief peculiarities for me are its sublimity, noble simplicity, depth of feeling, and antique form. In it Mendelssohn has shown his masterly skill most unmistakably."

A letter, written by Madame Moscheles to her relatives, gives a good impression of Mendelssohn's bearing in London shortly after: —

Our dear Mendelssohn — for I cannot call him otherwise — arrived on the 18th in London, and reached our house at seven in the evening. He brought his old friendliness and heartiness with him; was merry, genial, — well, in a word, just as you want a man to be in every respect. At tea, and during the whole evening, all sorts of reminiscences were gone over. Then he drew Moscheles to the piano, and made him play all his favorite studies; and, as each one was also his own favorite, he grew so enthusiastic, that he only yielded to my third urgent request, that he would go to his bed and rest. On Saturday he was with us again; and, as Moscheles was engaged with a pupil, he and I spent an hour alone: he played me his overture to "Fingal's Cave." Chorley and Klingemann came to tea; and, in the evening, Felix the younger had great sport with his godfather, so that the whole house shook with their fun. Who would believe that the same man, who was so immensely droll with the child, could improvise music as he could? Then Mendelssohn and Moscheles played together, taking a common theme; and when I say it was grand, beautiful, memorable, I have not written the half. For seven years I have not heard them play as they did that night, I think; and it was fine enough to wait seven years for.

On Monday we rode to Birmingham, whither Mendelssohn had already preceded us; and on Tuesday we went to the Music Hall, and heard him play the organ. He played a fugue from Bach in a masterly manner, afterwards the "Israel in Egypt," and a miscellaneous programme. Lablache sung. He and the organ stood like giants over against each other, while many of the other singers seemed like pygmies. How the "Israel in Egypt," with Braham and Phillips and Lablache and Madame Dorns, sounded, with this organ to accompany, I must leave to your imagination.

We were with Mendelssohn again in the evening: he had much to tell us about his wife, and showed us her likeness, which is wonderfully beautiful. If she is what he describes her to be, she must be an angel.

On the 23d of September, Moscheles writes from Birmingham:—

I have received a new joy in Mendelssohn's visit; and I take him close to my very heart. In my eyes he appears interchangeable, as brother, son, lover; chiefly as a fiery musical enthusiast, who seems to hardly suspect how high a point he has himself reached. While his genius bears him so far above the common world, he yet knows very well how to be modest with it all. While Birmingham was in a flutter at containing within itself the great composer, and at being the first to welcome his newest work, he found time to sketch a pen-and-ink drawing of the city for our children. The view of the chimneys, factories, town hall, and the railway-carriage in which he and I are represented as sitting, is exceedingly well and truly done.

Yesterday morning the town hall presented an imposing appearance, by reason of its fulness, and the fine show of the chorus and orchestra. For music, we had Handel, Bach, Palestrina, and Mozart; Lablache great as ever. The second part was devoted to Mendelssohn: he was received with loud applause, and heartily. His direction of the orchestra produced an unwonted unity and precision. The "Lobgesang" is really a symphony joined with a religious cantata, the former wrought in a masterly manner, and in various styles, — strong, glowing, genial, and inspiring. The hymn and chorus part, which follows, is in the strictly severe style. Braham sang his recitative with great pathos, and with rejuvenated voice. A noble duet for two sopranos follows, and then the great masses of sound break grandly forth for the first time. The fugue then rises triumphantly over all; the organ thunders royally; and the drums, in double force, work the rhythm like the pulses of a man in the most exalted mood. A choral of such beauty followed, that the whole multitude rose from their seats, as they had only done before when the Hallelujah was sung. The fugue of the final chorus is grand: its chief theme is "Praise the Lord," which runs through the entire work. The loudest applause repaid the noble composer.

At three o'clock in the afternoon, when the hall was emptied, he played the organ for three-quarters of an hour, in the presence of some select friends. It did not seem as if he had been directing and hearing music before on the same day, but as if he were beginning the day afresh. The same evening we heard, for the first time, an act of the Gazza Ladra, sung by Caradori and Lablache; then Mendelssohn's G-minor concerto, played by him with an immense flow of spirit, and yet with a very delicate handling.

After the stay in Birmingham, came some very pleasant hours in London, closing with a meeting of mutual friends in Moscheles' house. Mendelssohn played the

score of the Hymn of Praise; and, after some other things, there was some four-handed improvisation, with a wonderful mixing of themes, yet so that all went harmoniously together.

It was determined to invite Chorley to make a third in taking the journey to Germany. On the departure Mendelssohn made a pen-sketch, in Madame Moscheles' album, of his experiences during the past weeks; Chorley wrote an explanation in doggerel; Moscheles put in a few hearty words of parting; and, at midnight, they three took the Dover mail-coach. The carriage had four inside places, and, unfortunately, an uninvited guest had the fourth. "He is a good sleeper," said one: "let's think what we can do with him when he wakes." — "Make away with him: that's the only help," said another. At that instant the sleeper awoke. Naturally, the speakers were anxious whether he had heard their miserable jokes; and Moscheles, not losing his presence of mind, says (in English), "And then she declared that she *never* would marry that man." The sentence remained a by-word among the friends. Mendelssohn broke out in Homeric laughter, and the others caught the contagion. What could the half-sleeping man have thought of his comrades?

When the friends reached Ostend, after an eight-hours' voyage, and a very uncomfortable one, Moscheles' first task was to write to his wife; Chorley added a few friendly words; Mendelssohn made a sketch of a steamer on a rough sea, and underneath wrote the words: —

Heiss mich nicht reden, heiss mich schweigen.
SCHILLER.
Es giebt Augenblicke im Menschenleben.
GOETHE.
Here the ship gave a lurch, and he grew sea-sick.
LORD BYRON.

Wir sitzen aber alle drei sehr comfortabel um das Feuer in Moscheles' Zimmer und gedenken Ihrer.

FELIX MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY.*

* It is impossible, in a translation, not to spoil the fun of this; which springs from the dignity of the quotations from Schiller and Goethe, coupled with the commonplace one from Byron, and the prose remark of Mendelssohn. But they run thus, put into English: "Bid me not speak: bid me keep silence;" then Goethe's, "There are

The further journey was made in Mendelssohn's private carriage; and was uneventful, save in the breaking of an axle.

Prior to the 10th of July, Mendelssohn and his wife were in Hamburgh, where Moscheles gave a concert, with the valuable help of his great friend. It was, of course, very successful. Madame Moscheles was now with her husband; and, from a letter which she wrote at that time, we gather her impressions about Mendelssohn's wife. She says, "At last my earnest longing is met: I have made acquaintance with the beautiful, lovely Cecile. Mendelssohn was quite right when he said that we should understand and love each other. I had no time to lose in order to love her; for to see her, and to be drawn to her, was a simultaneous act with me. Mendelssohn can surely be congratulated, that with his enthusiastic, excitable, overflowing nature, this gentle, womanly being is his life's companion: they complement each other perfectly."

On the 10th of April, 1843, the Leipzig Conservatory, with Mendelssohn at the head, received its first pupil. In 1847 the Conservatorium had the following list of professors: —

Dr. Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, composition and solo playing.
C. Becker, organ, practice in directing.
David, Klengel, Sachse, violin.
Gade, harmony and composition.
Hauptmann, harmony, counterpoint.
Moscheles, chief teacher of the piano, practice in execution, and in piano composition.
Plaidy, Wenzel, piano.
Böhme, solo and chorus singing.
Brendel, lecturer on music.
Neumann, Italian language.
Richter, harmony and instrumentalism.*

moments in the life of man;" and Mendelssohn's is merely this, "We are sitting together, all three of us, notwithstanding all this, around the fire very comfortably in Moscheles' room; and are thinking of you."

* Lampadius has told the story of Mendelssohn's last days and death so fully, that I will not quote the parallel passages from Mrs. Moscheles' life of her husband. — ED.